



12801

szh



Persons and Pictures

FROM THE

HISTORIES

OF

FRANCE AND ENGLAND

FROM THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO THE FALL OF THE STUARTS.

BY

HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT,

Author of "The Captains of the Old Republics," "Cavaliers of England," "Marmaduke Wyvil," "Oliver Cromwell," "The Roman Traitor," &c., &c.

NEW YORK:

RIKER, THORNE & CO.,

129 FULTON STREET.

1854.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by

RIKER, THORNE & Co.,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District
of New York.

*R. CRAIGHEAD, Printer and Stereotyper,
53 Vesey street, New York.*

DA28
H4

Persons and Pictures

FROM THE

HISTORIES OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND.



PERSONS AND PICTURES

FROM THE

HISTORIES OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

THE papers of which this volume consists, most of which have appeared at different periods during the last twelve years, in various well known periodicals, were composed with the idea of showing the progress and advance of manners, characters, and principles, as influenced by the progress of time and the course of events, during the most stirring and interesting epochs of the French and English Histories—from the Conquest to the fall of the Stuarts—from the introduction of the Feudal System to the establishment of a constitutional Government.

The persons introduced, are invariably true Historic personages, delineated with a pen as candid and as free from prejudice as the author knows how to wield.

The Pictures and Scenes, if in some instances fictitious, are drawn, it is believed, with perfect fidelity to the costume of the day, the spirit of the times, and the character of the persons brought upon the stage as actors.

The whole, it is hoped, will be found to exhibit a series of lively and dramatic views of some of the most celebrated individuals, some of the most remarkable instances of vice and virtue, heroism and fortitude, and some of the most picturesque events, which occur in the history of six eventful centuries.

In any case, no word will be found in them inconsistent with either the letter or the spirit of History—none, assuredly, overstepping the modesty of nature.

HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT.

THE CEDARS, *March 24th*, 1854.

M308467

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

PERSONS AND PICTURES

FROM THE

HISTORY OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
EDITHA, THE SWAN-NECKED,	MLXVI. 9
THE COUNTESS OF MONTFORT,	MCCCXLVI. 29
PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT,	MCCCXLVII. 51
THE FOREST OF LE MANS,	MCCCLXXXVII. 71
THE MAID OF ORLEANS,	MCCCCXXIX. 89
THE LADY CATHERINE DOUGLASS,	MCCCCXXXVII. 109
MARGARET OF ANJOU,	MCCCCLVII. 129
HENRY VIII. AND HIS WIVES,	MDXXI. 165
ANNE ASCUE,	MDXLVI. 189
JANE GREY AND GUILFORD DUDLEY,	MDLIV. 205
ELIZABETH TUDOR AND MARY STUART,	MDLXVIII. 223
SIR WALTER RALEIGH AND HIS WIFE,	MDCXVIII. 241
CROMWELL AND CHARLES I.,	MDCXLVIII. 259
CHARLOTTE DE LA TREMOUILLE,	MDCLI. 275
THE KING'S GRATITUDE,	MDCLXXXII. 289
THE LADY ALICE LISLE,	MDCLXXXV. 359
DITTON-IN-THE-DALE,	MDCLXXXVII. 373



Editha;

THE SWAN-NECKED.

1866.



EDITHA, THE SWAN-NECKED.

ENGLAND was happy yet and free under her Saxon kings. The unhappy natives of the land, the Britons of old time, long ago driven back into their impregnable fastnesses among the Welsh mountains, and the craggy and pathless wilds of Scotland, still rugged and hirsute with the yet uninvaded masses of the great Caledonian forest, had subsided into quiet, and disturbed the lowland plains of fair England no longer ; and so long as they were left free to enjoy their rude pleasures of the chase and of internal welfare, undisturbed, were content to be debarred from the rich pastures and fertile corn-fields which had once owned their sway. The Danes and Norsemen, savage Jarls and Vikings of the North, had ceased to prey on the coasts of Northumberland and Yorkshire ; the seven kingdoms of the turbulent and tumultuous Heptarchy, ever distracted by domestic strife, had subsided into one realm, ruled under laws, regular, and for the most part mild and equable, by a single monarch, occupied by one homogeneous and kindred race, wealthy and prosperous according to the idea of wealth and prosperity in those days, at peace at home and undisturbed from without ; if not, indeed, very highly civilized, at least supplied with all the luxuries and comforts which the age knew or demanded—a happy, free, contented people, with a patri-

archal aristocracy, and a king limited in his prerogatives by the rights of his people, and the privileges of the nobles as secured by law.

Such was England, when on the death of Hardicanute, Edward, afterward called the Confessor, ascended the throne by the powerful aid of Earl Godwin, and re-established the old Saxon dynasty on a base which seemed to promise both durability and peace.

Had this Edward been in any sense a man, it is probable that the crown of England would have continued in the Saxon line, that the realm of England would have remained in the hands of an unmixed race, and that the great dominant people—most falsely named by an absurd misnomer Anglo-Saxon, since with the slightest possible coloring of the ancient British blood, they are the offspring purely of an intermingling of Saxon and Norman blood; owing to the former their stubborn pertinacity of will, to the latter their fiery energy, their daring enterprise and quick intellect—would never have sprung into existence to hold the balance of power, if not the absoluteness of sway on each side of the ocean, and in the four quarters of the globe.

But he was not a man, only a monk—a miserable lay monk—a husband of Earl Godwin's lovely daughter, yet a fanatical celibatarian—not fit to be a king—not fit to be a man—not fit even to be a Saxon monk, when monks were men like Becket.

Jealous of his Saxon nobles, he had recourse to Norman favorites, and England was already half a Norman province, and William of Normandy his favorite, until the counter jealousy of his nobles compelled him again to have recourse to Godwin, and his gallant sons, Harold, and Gurth, and Leofwin, who cleared the kingdom of the intrusive Norman courtiers, re-established the Saxon constitution, and nominally as the minis-

ters and deputies of the weak king, but really as his guardians and governors, ruled England happily, well, and lawfully, in his stead.

Godwin, meantime, had departed this life, full of years and honors. Edward, the nephew of Edward the Confessor, whom he had invited over from Hungary, and destined to be his successor, had departed also, leaving his son, Edgar Atheling, a minor, heir to his empty expectations and his noble blood. And now what little intellect there was and spirit in the monk-king awoke, and he perceived, with that singular clearness of perception which sometimes seems to visit men, dull before and obtuse of intellect, when they are dying, that his people now would willingly adopt the Norman for a ruler, or submit to the sway of William the Bastard, to whom he had in past days well nigh promised the succession of his kingdom.

Therefore, of late, Harold, the son of Godwin, the flower of the whole Saxon race, and, in fact, their ruler, as the king's lieutenant and vicegerent, came to be looked upon by the whole Saxon population of the land, as their next Saxon king, in the to-be hereafter. The jealousies which had disturbed the mind of Edward had long since passed away; and Harold, whom he once had looked upon almost with the eyes of popular aversion, he now regarded almost as his own son. Yet still the Saxon hostages, Ulfroth, the youngest son of Godwin, and Harold's brother, and the still younger son of Swega—who, in the time of his mad distrust of his own countrymen, his unnatural predilection for the Normans, had been delivered for safe keeping into the hands of William of Normandy—still lingered melancholy exiles, far from the white cliffs of their native land. And now for the first time since their departure, did the aspect of affairs look propitious for their liberation; and Harold, brother of the one and uncle of the other, full of proud confidence in

his own intellect and valor, applied to Edward for permission that he might cross the English channel, and, personally visiting the Norman, bring back the hostages in honor and security to the dear land of their forefathers. The countenance of the Confessor fell at the request, and conscious, probably, in his own heart, of that rash promise made in days long past, and long repeated to the ambitious William, he manifested a degree of agitation amounting almost to alarm.

"Harold," he said, after a long pause of deliberation, "Harold, my son, since you have made me this request, and that your noble heart seems set on its accomplishment, it shall not be my part to do constraint or violence to your affectionate and patriotic wishes. Go, then, if such be your resolve, but go without *my* leave, and contrary to *my* advice. It is not that I would not have your brother and your kinsman home, but that I do distrust the means of their deliverance; and sure I am, that should you go in person, some terrible disaster shall befall ourselves and this our country. Well do I know Duke William; well do I know his spirit, brave, crafty, daring, deep, ambitious, and designing. You, too, he hates especially; nor will he grant you anything save at a price that shall draw down an overwhelming ruin on you who shall pay it, and on the throne of which you are the glory and the stay. If we would have these hostages delivered at a less ransom than the downfall of our Saxon dynasty, the slavery of merry England, another messenger than thou must seek the wily Norman; be it, however, as thou wilt, my friend, my kinsman, and my son."

Oh! sage advice, and admirable counsel! advice how fatally neglected! counsel how sadly frustrated! Gallant and brave and young, fraught with a noble sense of his own powers, a full reliance on his own honorable purposes, untaught as yet in that hardest lesson of the world's hardest school, distrust of

others, suspicion of all men, it is not wonderful that Harold thought lightly of the wisdom of the old in the self-sufficient confidence of youth.

Stranger it is, and sadder, that he thought lightly of the apprehensions, laughed at the doubts, and resisted the tears of one whom he had sworn to love dearer and better and more truly than any other living thing on earth, or in Heaven—whom, as yet, he did love as perfectly as any mortal man may love who is ambitious—for what is ambition, but the most refined and sublimated of all selfishness? Editha, the swan-necked, the fairest, brightest, purest of the Saxon maids of England,—Editha, playmate of his guileless and happy boyhood—betrothed of his promising and buoyant youth—mistress—alas! alas!—though under promise still of honorable wedlock—of his aspiring and ambitious manhood.

For she too had loved not wisely, but too well; she too had fallen not an ignoble nor unreluctant victim to man's cupidity, ambition, selfishness, and treason—and sad penance did she too, almost lifelong, for that one fatal error, and by most cruel suffering win its absolution.

"Be sure," she said, severely weeping with her fond white arms about his muscular neck, and her luxuriant light brown tresses floating around them both, clasped in that lingering, last embrace, like a veil of orient sunlight; "be sure, Harold, that if you do go on this fatal journey—fatal at once to you, and me, and England—we never shall meet more on earth, until we meet ne'er again to sever in the dark grave. Nevertheless, go you will, and go you must; therefore no tears, no prayers of mine shall thwart the purpose which they may not alter, nor shake the spirit which they may not turn from its set will. The weird that is spæd to every man when he is born, he must dree it to the end. And my weird is to die for

you, as it is yours to die—in vain! in vain!—for England. But it is not our weird ever to be, or here or elsewhere, man and wife. Go your way, therefore, go your way, and God's blessings go with you, and be about you; but you and I have met this time, to meet no more for ever!"

They parted; and on the morrow Harold set forth upon his journey, as if it were in pursuit of pleasure, surrounded by a blythe train of gay companions, gallantly mounted, gorgeously attired, with falcon upon fist and greyhound at heel—gaily and merrily he set forth on that serene autumnal morning, for the coast of Sussex. And on the morrow Editha set forth upon her journey, as if it were to the grave, surrounded by weeping attendants, clad in the darkest weeds, with veiled faces, and crucifixes borne before them—sadly and forebodingly she set forth on that serene autumnal morning, for the sequestered cloisters of the nunnery of Croyland.

Nor had Harold tarried long in the princely court at Avranches, ere all the sad prognostications, alike of the aged monarch and the youthful lady, were made good; for having been induced first to promise in an unguarded hour to aid William in obtaining the possession of the English crown, that wily prince soon enveigled him into swearing to the due performance of that rash and unholy promise, on relics the most sacred that could be collected, which were secretly concealed beneath the altar cloth, and displayed only when the unhallowed oath was plighted. The pledges on both sides were determined. Alice, the Norman's daughter, should be the Saxon's promised bride; Ulfroth, the Saxon's brother, should remain the Norman's hostage until the crown of Edward should bind the brows of William.

So Harold set sail immediately for England, leaving the brother—for whose liberty he came a suitor—ten times more

forfeit than he had been before, and to find the woman whom he had so disloyally forsworn, the bride of heaven, sequestered in the nunnery of Croyland.

On his first interview with Edward, he related all that had occurred—even his own involuntary oath! and the old sovereign trembled and grew pale, but manifested nothing of surprise or anger.

“I knew it,” he replied, in calm but hollow tones. “I knew it, and I did forewarn you, how that your visit to the Norman should bring misery on you and ruin on your country! As I forewarned you, so has it come to pass. So shall it come to pass hereafter, till all hath been fulfilled. God only grant that I live not to see it.”

Nor did he live to see it. But he did live to see Harold, once forsworn to Editha, forsworn again to Alice. For being sent to suppress a rebellion in the North, raised by Morcar and Edwin, Earls of Northumberland and grandsons of the great Duke Leofric, against his own brother Tostig, he openly took sides with the former, espousing their sister Adelgitha, and pronouncing against Tostig, who had fled infuriate to his father-in-law, the Duke of Flanders, soon to raise war against his native land and its kindred usurper.

For worn out with anxiety and sorrow, the feeble monk-king passed away, and was gathered to his fathers, leaving an imbecile heir to his throne of right, in the helpless Edgar Atheling, and two fierce, capable, and mutually detested rivals, in Harold, the Saxon, and the Norman William.

Little time had Harold, who stepped as by right, and of course, into the vacant seat of royalty, to attend now to wife or friend; for scarcely was he seated on the perilous throne, ere the same gale filled the sails of two royal armaments, both hastening to his own shores to dispute his ill-won greatness—

one from the cold shores of Norway, bearing the fierce and envious Tostig, backed by Harold Hardrada, king of Norway, with all his wild sea-kings and terrible Berserkers, under the flag of Norseland—the other from the sunny coasts of Normandy and the fair Cotentin, filled with the mailed Norman chivalry, the men who never charged in vain, or couched lance but to conquer, under the banner consecrated by the pope against the perjured and the traitor, led by the mighty bastard.

Still it is said that, false to Editha, false to Alice, he was again false to Adelgitha, and would have recalled his swan-necked beauty from the cold couch of vowed virginity, to the genial marriage bed; from the grey cloister to the gorgeous court, of which she should be the queen. But he met no response, save the most significant of all—silence.

The sinner had repented and become a saint. The weak girl had been ripened through the fire of anguish into the heroic woman.

How Tostig fared with his ally, Harold Hardrada, the gigantic, the bridge of Staneford witnessed; and the raven banner borne down the bloody streams of Derwent to the exulting Ouse, and the Saxon cry of victory! Hurrah for king Harold!

How William fared with his Norman chivalry, the downs of Hastings witnessed, and the heights, known to this day, of Battle, and the consecrated banner high in air, and the Norman cry of victory, "*Dex aide les gentils gens de Normandie.*"

* * * * *

It was the morning after the exterminating fight of Hastings. The banner blessed of the Roman pontiff streamed on the tainted air, from the same hillock whence the Dragon standard of the Saxons had shone unconquered to the sun of yester even!

Hard by was pitched the proud pavilion of the conqueror, who, after the tremendous strife and perilous labors of the preceding day, reposed himself in fearless and untroubled confidence upon the field of his renown; secure in the possession of the land which he was destined to transmit to his posterity, for many a hundred years, by the red title of the sword. To the defeated Saxons, morning, however, brought but a renewal of those miseries, which, having yesterday commenced with the first victory of their Norman lords, were never to conclude or even to relax, until the complete amalgamation of the rival races should leave no Normans to torment, no Saxons to endure; all being merged at last into one general name of English, and by their union giving origin to the most powerful, and brave, and intellectual people the world has ever looked upon since the extinction of Rome's freedom. At the time of which we are now speaking, nothing was thought of by the victors save how to rivet more securely on the necks of the unhappy natives, their yoke of iron—nothing by the poor subjugated Saxons, but how to escape for the moment the unrelenting massacre, which was urged, far and wide, by the remorseless conquerors throughout the devastated country. With the defeat of Harold's host, all national hope of freedom was at once lost to England—though to a man the English population were brave and loyal, and devoted to their country's rights. The want of leaders—all having perished side by side, on that disastrous field—of combination, without which myriads are but dust in the scale against the force of one united handful—rendered them quite unworthy of any serious fears, and even of consideration to the bloodthirsty barons of the invading army. Over the whole expanse of level country, which might be seen from the slight elevation whereon was pitched the camp of William, on every side might be descried small parties of Nor-

man horse, driving in with their bloody lances as if they were mere cattle, the unhappy captives, a few of whom they now began to spare, not from the slightest sentiment of mercy, but literally that their arms were weary with the task of slaying, although their hearts were yet insatiate of blood. It must be taken now into consideration by those who listen with dismay and wonder to the accounts of pitiless barbarity, of ruthless, indiscriminating slaughter on the part of men, whom they have hitherto been taught to look upon as brave, indeed, as lions in the field, but not partaking of the lion's nature after the field was won—not only that the seeds of enmity had long been sown between those rival people, but that the deadly crop of hatred had grown up, watered abundantly by tears and blood of either; and lastly, that the fierce fanaticism of religious persecution was added to the natural rancor of a war waged for the ends of conquest or extermination. The Saxon nation, from the king downward, to the meanest serf who fought beneath his banner, or buckled on the arms of liberty, were all involved under the common bar of the pope's interdict!—they were accursed of God, and handed over by His holy church to the kind mercies of the secular arm! and, therefore, though but yesterday they were a powerful and united nation, to-day they were but a vile horde of scattered outlaws, whom any man might slay wherever he should find them, whether in arms or otherwise, amenable for blood neither to any mortal jurisdiction, nor even to the ultimate tribunal to which all must submit hereafter, unless deprived of their appeal, like these poor fugitives, by excommunication from the pale of Christianity. For thirty miles around the Norman camp, pillars of smoke by day, continually streaming upward to the polluted heaven, and the red glare of nightly conflagration, told fatally the doom of many a happy home! Neither the castle nor the

cottage might preserve their male inhabitants from the sword's edge, their females from more barbarous persecution! Neither the sacred hearth of hospitality, nor the more sacred altars of God's churches, might protect the miserable fugitives—neither the mail-shirt of the man-at-arms, nor the monk's frock of serge, availed against the thrust of such as the land, wherein those horrors were enacted, has never witnessed since, through many a following age.

High noon approached, and in the conqueror's tent a gorgeous feast was spread—the red wine flowed profusely, and song and minstrelsy arose with their heart-soothing tones, to which the feeble groans of dying wretches bore a dread burden from the plain, whereon they still lay struggling in their great agonies, too sorely maimed to live, too strong as yet to die. But, ever and anon, their wail waxed feebler and less frequent; for many a plunderer was on foot, licensed to ply his odious calling in the full light of day, reaping his first, if not his richest booty, from the dead bodies of their slaughtered foemen. Ill fared the wretches who lay there, untended by the hand of love or mercy—"scorched by the death thirst, and writhing in vain"—but worse fared they who showed a sign of life, to the relentless robbers of the dead—for then the dagger, falsely called that of mercy, was the dispenser of immediate immortality. The conqueror sat at his triumphant board, and barons drank his health—"First English monarch, of the pure blood of monarchy." "King by the right of the sword's edge." "Great, glorious, and sublime!"—yet was not his heart softened, nor was his bitter hate toward the unhappy prince, who had so often ridden by his side in war, and feasted at the same board with him in peace, relinquished or abated. Even while the feast was at the highest, while every heart was jocund and sublime, a trembling messenger approached, craving, on bended

knee, permission to address the conqueror and king—for so he was already schooled by brief, but hard experience, to style the devastator of his country.

“Speak out, dog Saxon,” cried the ferocious prince; “but since thou must speak, see that thy speech be brief, an thou would’st keep thy tongue uncropped thereafter!”

“Great Duke, and mighty,” replied the trembling envoy, “I bear you greeting from Elgitha, erewhile the noble wife of Godwin, the queenly mother of our late monarch—now, as she bade me style her, the humblest of your suppliants and slaves. Of your great nobleness and mercy, mighty King, she sues you that you will grant her the poor leave to search amid the heaps of those of our Saxon dead, that her three sons may at least lie in consecrated earth. So may God send you peace and glory here, and everlasting happiness hereafter!”

“Hear to the Saxon slave!” William exclaimed, turning as if in wonder towards his nobles, “hear to the Saxon slave, that dares to speak of consecrated earth, and of interment for the accursed body of that most perjured, excommunicated liar! Hence! tell the mother of the dead dog, whom you have dared to style your King, that for the interdicted and accursed dead, the sands of the sea-shore are but too good a sepulchre!”

“She bade me proffer, humbly, to your acceptance, the weight of Harold’s body in pure gold,” faintly gasped forth the terrified and cringing messenger, “so you would grant her that permission.”

“Proffer us gold!—what gold? or whose? Know, villain, all the gold throughout this conquered realm is ours. Hence, dog and outcast, hence! nor presume e’er again to come, insulting us, by proffering, as a boon to our acceptance, that which we own already, by the most indefeasible and ancient right of conquest! Said I not well, knights, vavasours, and nobles?”

"Well! well! and nobly," answered they, one and all. "The land is ours—and all therein is—their dwellings, their demesnes, their wealth, whether of gold or silver, or of cattle—yea! they themselves are ours! themselves, their sons, their daughters and their wives—our portion and inheritance, to be our slaves for ever!"

"Begone! you have our answer," exclaimed the Duke, spurning him with his foot, "and hark ye, arbalestmen and archers, if any Saxon more approach us on like errand, see if his coat of skin be proof against the quarrel of the shaft."

And once again the feast went on, and louder rang the revelry, and faster flew the wine-cup round the tumultuous board! All day the banquet lasted, even till the dews of heaven fell on that fatal field, watered sufficiently, already, by the rich gore of many a noble heart. All day the banquet lasted, and far was it prolonged into the watches of the night, when, rising with the wine cup in his hand, "Nobles and barons," cried the Duke, "friends, comrades, conquerors—bear witness to my vow! Here, on these heights of Hastings, and more especially upon yon mound and hillock, where God gave to us our high victory, and where our last foe fell,—there will I raise an Abbey to His eternal praise and glory; richly endowed it shall be from the first fruits of this our land. Battle, it shall be called, to send the memory of this, the great and singular achievement of our race, to far posterity,—and, by the splendor of our God, wine shall be plentier among the monks of Battle, than water in the noblest and the richest cloister else, search the world over! This do I swear, so may God aid, who hath thus far assisted us for our renown, and will not now deny His help, when it be asked for his own glory!"

The second day dawned on the place of horror, and not a Saxon had presumed, since the intolerant message of the Duke,

to come to look upon his dead ! But now the ground was needed, whereon to lay the first stone of the abbey William had vowed to God. The ground was needed ; and, moreover, the foul steam from the human shambles was pestilential on the winds of heaven—and now, by trumpet sound and proclamation through the land, the Saxons were called forth, on pain of death, to come and seek their dead, lest the health of the conquerors should suffer from the pollution they themselves had wrought. Scarce had the blast sounded, and the glad tidings been announced, once only, ere from their miserable shelters—where they had herded with the wild beasts of the forest, from wood, morass, and cavern, happy if there they might escape the Norman spear—forth crept the relics of that persecuted race. Old men and matrons, with hoary heads, and steps that tottered no less from the effect of terror than of age—maidens and youths, and infants, too happy to obtain permission to search amid those festering heaps, dabbling their hands in the corrupt and pestilential gore which filled each nook and hollow of the dinted soil, so they might bear away, and water with their tears, and yield to consecrated ground, the relics of those brave ones once loved so fondly, and now so bitterly lamented. It was toward the afternoon of that same day, when a long train was seen approaching, with crucifix, and cross, and censer ; the monks of Waltham Abbey, coming to offer homage for themselves, and for their tenantry and vassals, to him whom they acknowledged as their king—expressing their submission to the high will of the Norman pontiff, justified, as they said and proved, by the assertion of God's judgment upon the hill of Hastings.

Highly delighted by this absolute submission, the first he had received from any English tongue, the conqueror received the monks with courtesy and favor, granting them high immuni-

ties, and promising them free protection and the unquestioned tenure of their broad demesnes for ever. Nay, after he had answered their address, he detained two of their number, men of intelligence, as with his wonted quickness of perception he instantly discovered, from whom to derive information as to the nature of his new-acquired country and newly-conquered subjects.

Osgad and Ailric, the deputed messengers from the respected principal of their community, had yet a farther and higher object than to tender their submission to the conqueror. Their orders were, at all and every risk, to gain permission to consign the corpse of their late king and founder to the earth, previously denied to him. But they, for all his courtesy to them, and kindness, churchmen although they were, dared not so much as to mention the forbidden name of their unhappy king—nor was there any hope that any tomb should receive the mangled relics of the last Saxon King of England, although the corpses of his brothers, Leofwin and Gurth, had been found on the hillock whereon the last Saxon blow was stricken, whereon the last Saxon banner floated—found, recognised, though sorely mangled, and consigned to the grave with rites of sepulchre so freely granted as might have proved to those craven priests, that the wrath of the conqueror was at end, and that the valiant though fierce Norman was not one to wage war, after the first burst of wrath had blown over, on the gallant dead.

Tidings at length reached Editha—Editha, the swan-necked, who, deserted and dishonored when he she loved had a throne in prospect, had not ceased from her true-hearted adoration, but in her joyless-home still shared her heart in silence between her memories and her God.

Her envoy won the conqueror's ear, and it is avouched that a tear dimmed his unblenching eye, when he heard her sad tale

received her humble prayer. He swore a great oath as he started from his regal throne. "By the splendor of God's eyes!" he swore, "a true woman! worthy to be the mother of men!" So her request was granted, and to their wonder and delight, Osgad and Ailric heard the mandate that they should seek for, and entomb the poor and fallen clay that so late boasted itself king.

Throughout the whole of the third day succeeding that unparalleled defeat, those old men toiled among the naked corpses, gory and grim, maimed and disfigured, festering in the sun, weltering in the night dews, infecting the wholesome airs of heaven with a reek, as from the charnel-house—toiled, if they might find the object of their veneration. But vain were all their toils—vain all their searchings, even when they called in the aid of his most intimate attendants, ay! of the mother that bore him. Leofwin and Gurth had been recognised with ease, but not one eye, even of those who had most dearly loved him, could now distinguish the mutilated features of the king.

But if there was no eye at Hastings, there was a heart at Croyland that could not be deceived, even by the corruption and the worm. Forth from her nunnery in Croyland, whence she had never thought to move again, save to her long last home, Editha, the swan-necked, came. Nine days had elapsed ere she should reach the fatal spot, and the appalling horrors of the search, the awful extent of the pollution, denied the smallest hope of his discovery. Yet she still expressed her full and confident conviction that she could recognise that loved one, so long as but one hair remained upon that head she had once so dearly cherished.

It was night when she arrived on the fatal field, and by the light of torches once more they set out on their awful duty.

"Lead me," she said, "lead me to the spot where the last blow was stricken, where the last warrior fell."

And they led to the knoll where Leofwin and Gurth had been discovered. It was a hideous pile of pestilential carnage, horses and men, Normans and Saxons, piled on each other, twenty deep, around a shattered pole, which had been once the staff of the Saxon's royal banner.

She sprang down from her palfrey, unassisted, and with an instinct that nothing could deceive went straight to the corpse of Harold. It had been turned already to and fro, many times, by those who sought it. His mother had looked on it, and pronounced it not her son's, but that devoted heart knew it at once, and broke! Whom rank and wealth and honors had divided, defeat, ruin, and death made one! and the same grave contained the cold remains of the swan-necked Editha, and the last scion of the Saxon kings of England.

Was not she, then, frail sinner as she was, one not the least heroic of the heroic women of the olden days, and with the truest woman's truest heroism!



The Countess of Montfort;

OR,

THE RELIEF OF HENNEBON.

1346.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1917

THE COUNTESS OF MONTFORT ;

OR, THE RELIEF OF HENNEBON.

I wish now to return to the Countess of Montfort, who possessed the courage of a man, and the heart of a lion.

FROISSART—CHRONICLES, VOL. I. C. 72.

THE age of knight-errantry, as we read of it, and in some degree believe, as recited in the *Morte d'Arthur*, and the other British or Breton romances, had never any real existence more than its heroes, Lancelot du Lac, Tristan le Blanc, or Pellinor or Pellinore, or any of the heroes of "the table round;" the very date of whose alleged existence, centuries before chivalry or feudalism was heard of, precludes the possibility of their identity.

The age of chivalry, however, had a real being; it was in very truth "the body of a time, its form and pressure;" and that was the age of Edward the Third and the Black Prince of England, of the Captal de Buch and Sire Eustache de Ribeaumont, of Bertrand du Guesclin and Charles of Luxemburg, the valiant blind king of Bohemia, and those who won or died at Crecy or Poitiers.

That was the age when knights shaped their conduct to the legends which they read in the old romances, which were to them the code of honor, bravery, and virtue.

That was the age when "*Dieu, son honneur et sa dame*," was the war-cry and the creed of every noble knight, when *noblesse*

oblige was a proverb not—as now—without a meaning. And of that age I have a legend, reproduced from the old chronicles of old Froissart, so redolent of the truth, the vigor, and the fresh raciness of those old days, when manhood was still held in more esteem than money, and the person of a man something more valuable than his purse, that I think it may be held worthy to arrest attention, even in these days of sordid deference to the sovereign dollar, of stolid indifference to everything in humanity that is of a truth good, or great, or noble.

“I wish now to return,” says Froissart, in a fine passage, a portion of which I have chosen as my motto, “to the Countess of Montfort, who possessed the courage of a man, and the heart of a lion.”

Previous to this, the veracious chronicler of the antique wars of France and England has related, how by the death of the Duke of Brittany, who left no issue, the ducal coronet of that province, which, together with Normandy and Anjou, had always since the Norman conquest maintained relations with the crown of England, was left in dispute between John Count de Montfort, the half-brother of the late duke, who had married the sister of Lewis Earl of Flanders, and a daughter of the late duke’s brother-german, who was wedded to Charles, younger son of Guy Count de Blois, by the sister of Philip of Valois, the reigning king of France.

With which of these the absolute right rested, is not a matter of much moment; as it is with the romance of feudalism, not the accuracy of heraldic genealogies, that I am now dealing. Nor, were it important, have I at hand the means of deciding certainly; since the solution of the question depends on facts not clearly presented, as regarding the seniority of the brothers, the precise degrees of consanguinity, and the local laws of the French provinces.

Both parties appear to have relied on alleged declarations, each in his own favor, by the late duke, John of Brittany.

The Bretons it would seem, almost to a man, sided with the Count de Montfort ; and this would in these days go very far towards settling the question.

King Philip of France naturally took part with his niece, the wife of a great feudatory of his crown ; Edward the Third of England, as naturally, favored the opposite claimant ; expecting doubtless that he should receive the count's homage as his vassal for Brittany, in case of his recovering his duchy by the aid of British arms.

The Count de Montfort was summoned before the king and peers of France to answer to the charge of having already done homage to the English king, as suzerain of a French province—a charge, by the way, which he absolutely denied—and to prove his title to the duchy before Parliament. To their decision he expressed his willingness to defer, and offered to abide by their judgment ; but the same night, suspecting ill faith on the part of his rival and the French king, and fearing treachery, he withdrew secretly into his own duchy, of which he had already gained absolute possession, holding all its strong places with the free consent of the lords, the burgesses, the clergy, and the commonalty of the chief towns, and being everywhere addressed as Duke of Brittany.

After the departure of the count from Paris, the Parliament, almost as a matter of course, decided against him—firstly *par contumace*, or as we should now say, *by default*—secondly, for treason, as having done homage to a foreign liege lord—and thirdly, because the Countess of Blois was the daughter of the next brother of the late duke, while the Count John de Montfort was the youngest of the family.

I may observe here, that it is more than doubtful whether the

alleged homage to Edward was at this time rendered ; that the fact was positively denied by Montfort himself, and by his other historians ; and furthermore, that the descent to the female line is very questionable in any French province or principality, the *Salique* law, adverse to the succession of females, prevailing in that country.

Be this, however, as it may, the princes and peers of France, considering that the dispute between the rival claimants had resolved itself into a question between the rival crowns of France and England, which it virtually had, espoused to a man the party of Charles of Blois.

Thereupon, the Dukes of Normandy, of Alençon, of Burgundy, of Bourbon, the Lord Lewis of Spain, the Constable of France, the Count de Blois, and the Viscount de Rohan, with all the princes and barons present, undertook to maintain the rights of Charles ; entered Brittany with powerful forces ; and, after some sharp fighting, shut the Count of Montfort up in Nantes, where he was shortly afterwards delivered to the enemy, not without suspicion of treachery on the part of Sir Hervé de Léon, his late chief adviser, whom he had blamed severely for retreating too readily into the city, before the troops of Charles de Blois.

John de Montfort hereupon nearly disappears from history ; Froissart supposing that he died a prisoner in the tower of the Louvre. But it appears that, after three years' confinement, he made good his escape to England, and *then, not before*, did homage to Edward ; who aided him with a force under William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton, to recover his duchy, which his sudden death, after an unsuccessful attempt on Quimperlè, finally prevented. This is, however, in anticipation of the current of history, and more especially of those events which it is my purpose to illustrate in this sketch ; for, from the very

moment of his capture, the affairs, both civil and military, of the duchy were administered with the most distinguished energy, ability, and success by his wife, sister of Lewis Count of Flanders, a race noble and brave by descent and nature, "the Countess of Montfort, who possessed the courage of a man and the heart of a lion."

"She was in the city of Rennes," says her historian, "when she heard of the seizure of her lord; and, notwithstanding the great grief she had at heart, she did all she could to reanimate her friends and soldiers. Showing them a young child, called John, after his father, she said, 'Oh, gentlemen, do not be cast-down for what we have suffered by the loss of my lord; he was but one man. Look at my little child here; if it please God, he shall be his restorer, and shall do you much service. I have plenty of wealth, which I will distribute among you, and will seek out for such a leader as may give you a proper confidence.' When the Countess had, by these means, encouraged her friends and soldiers at Rennes, she visited all the other towns and fortresses, taking her young son John with her. She addressed and encouraged them in the same manner as she had done at Rennes. She strengthened her garrisons both with men and provisions, paid handsomely for everything, and gave largely wherever she thought it would have a good effect. She then went to Hennebon, near the sea, where she and her son remained all that winter, frequently visiting her garrisons, whom she encouraged and paid liberally."

Truly a noble woman—a true wife, a true mother, a true princess of her principality—she sought no woman's rights, but did a woman's duty—her duty as her absent husband's representative—her duty as her orphaned son's protectress—her duty as her unsovereigned people's sovereign lady. Nobility

and circumstance obliged her ; and nobly she discharged her obligation.

Much as I condemn women whom a morbid craving after notoriety and excitement urges to grasp the attire, the arms, the attributes of the other sex ; in the same degree do I honor, in the same degree admire and laud, the true-hearted woman, the true heroine, who not forcing or assailing, but obeying the claims of her nature, compels her temper to put on strength instead of softness, steels herself to do what she shrinks from doing, not because she arrogates the power of doing it better than the man could do it, but because she has no man to whom she might confide the doing of it.

The hen fighting the sparrow-hawk careless of self for her defenceless brood, is a spectacle beautiful to behold, filling every heart with genuine sympathy, because her act itself is genuine ; is part and parcel of her sex, her circumstances, her maternity ; in a word, is the act of the God of nature. The hen gaffed and cropped and fighting mains against the males of her own family in the beastly and bloody cock-pit, is a spectacle that would make the lowest frequenter of such vile arenas shudder with disgust, would wring from his lips an honest cry of shame.

Margaret of Anjou, in Hexham forest awing the bandit into submission by the undaunted royalty of her maternal eye—the Countess of Montfort, reanimating her faint-hearted garri-sons, even by donning steel harness for “her young child John”—Elizabeth of England, a-horse at Tilbury, for her Protestantism and her people—Maria Theresa, waving her sabre from the guarded mount to the four quarters of heaven in the maintenance of her kingdom and her cause—Marie Antoinette of France, defying her accusers at the misnamed judgment seat, fearless of her butchers at the guillotine—these are the true

types of nature, the true types of their sex, the true heroines, mastering the weakness of their sexual nature, through the might of their maternal nature—these are the hens championing their broods against the falcon.

But of this day of cant and fustian, the man-women, not heroines, called by no duty to the attire or the attributes of men, but panting indelicately for the notoriety, the fierce, passionate excitement of the political, nay ! for aught that appears, of the martial arena—these are the hens, if they could but see themselves as they see effeminate, unsexed men, gaffed and cropped and fed to do voluntary battle in the sinks and slaughterhouses of humanity, against the gamecocks of their species.

The Lady Macbeths of a falser period, who fancy that, by proving themselves so much less the woman, they can shine out so much more the man.

“But I wish now to return,” with my old friend Froissart, “to the Countess de Montfort, who possessed the courage of a man, and the heart of a lion,” and I will add—the soul, the instincts, and the excellence of a true woman.

During the winter succeeding the seizure of her lord, and the treason of Sir Hervè de Léon, who had attached himself to the Count de Blois, she remained peacefully occupied in Hennebon, in the education of her young child John ; and how she educated him was seen in his after career, as a knight valorous and gentle, a prince beloved and popular.

But with the summer there came strife and peril, and protection became paramount to everything beside.

During the winter, while the Countess de Montfort lay tranquil in Hennebon, the Count Charles de Blois lay as tranquilly in Nantes, which—as I have before related—had been treasonably surrendered to him by Sir Hervè de Léon and the citizens

of the place. But now that the fair weather had returned, that the swallows were disporting themselves in the summer air, the cuckoos calling by the river-sides, now that armies could hold themselves in the fields with plenty of all sorts around them, he summoned to him all those great princes of the royal blood, and all the noble barons and valiant knights who had fought with him in the last campaign. And, mindful of their promises, they drew all their forces to a head, and came with a great array of spears of France, and Genoese cross-bowmen, and Spanish men-at-arms, under the leading of the Lord Lewis d'Espagne, to re-conquer for him all that remained unconquered of the fair land of Brittany.

During the last year the strong Castle of Chateauceux had been won by them by sheer dint of arms, and Nantes, the capital of the province, by the vileness of the traitor Hervé de Léon; the next strongest place to these was the city of Rennes, which had been put into complete readiness for war by its late lord, and further fortified by the countess, who had intrusted it to Sir William de Cadoudal, a brave Breton knight, and in all probability an ancestor of the no less valiant George, of the same patronymic, the great Vendean chief and victim of Napoleon, co-murdered with the princely Duc d'Enghien.

This town the French lords surrounded on all sides, and assailed it with fierce and continual skirmishes at the barricades, and wrought it much damage by the persistency of their onslaughts; but still the defenders defended themselves so valiantly, resolute not to lose their liege-lady's city, that the besiegers lost more than they gained—for many lives were lost on both sides, but far most on the French part; and yet more wounded—nor could they amend it anything; nor win a tower, nor force a gate, though they made assaults daily, and plied the walls from mighty engines, with great store of artillery.

Now, when the Countess of Montfort heard how the French lords had returned into Brittany, and were laying waste the country and besieging her strong city, she sent one of the best of all her knights, Sir Amauri de Clisson, who should repair straightway to King Edward, in England, to entreat his assistance, upon condition that her young son should take for his wife one of the daughters of the king, and give her the title of Duchess of Brittany.

And the king, well pleased to strengthen his claim on that fair province, readily assented, and ordered Sir Walter Manny, one of the prowrest and most skilled in war of all his knights, to gather together so many men-at-arms as he should with Sir Amauri's advice judge proper; and to take with him three or four thousand of the best archers in England, and to take ship immediately to the succor of the Countess of Montfort.

And Sir Walter embarked with Sir Amauri de Clisson, and the two brothers Sir Lewis and Sir John de Land-Halle, the Haze of Brabant, Sir Herbert de Fresnoi, Sir Alain de Sirefonde, and many others, leaders of note; and men-at-arms not a few; and archers of England six thousand, the best men in the realm, whose backs no man had seen. And they took their ships, earnest to aid the countess with all speed; but they were overtaken by a mighty storm and tempest, and forced to remain at sea forty days, so that much ill fell out, and more would have befallen, but that it was not to be otherwise in the end, but that the countess should hold the duchy as her own, and her son's for ever.

In the meantime, the Count Charles of Blois pressed closer and closer to the town, and harassed the people sorely, so that the gentlemen and soldiers being but a few, and the rogue townsmen many, when they saw that no succors came nor seemed like to come, they grew impatient; and when Sir Wil-

liam de Cadoudal was determined to make no surrender, they rose on him by night, and cast him into prison; and so basely and treacherously yielded up the place to the Count Charles, on condition only that the men of the Montfort party should have no let or hindrance to go whither they would, with their effects and followings, under assurance.

Then Sir William de Cadoudal joined the Countess de Montfort where she abode in Hennebon, but where she had yet no tidings from the King Edward of England, or from Sir Amauri de Clisson, or any whom she had sent in his company.

And she had with her in Hennebon the Bishop of Léon, the uncle of that traitor Sir Hervè de Léon, Sir Yves de Tresiquidi, the Lord of Landreman, Sir William de Cadoudal, the Governor of Guinecamp, the two brothers of Quirich, Sir Oliver, and Sir Henry de Spinefort, and many others.

Now the Count de Blois well foresaw that the countess once delivered into his hands with the child John de Montfort, the war was at an end for ever; and, without tarrying at Rennes when he had taken it, he marched direct upon Hennebon, to take it if he might by assault, and if not, to sit down before it; and the number of his host without was, as by thousands to hundreds of those within; and there were among them many great names for valor and for prowess—but there was that within which without was lacking, the indomitable heart, the immortal love of a true woman.

It was a little before noon on the 20th day of May, 1342, when the vanguard of that great host might be seen from the walls of Hennebon; and a beautiful sight it was to see them come; to behold the pennons and pennoncelles, the helmets and habergeons, the plumes and surcoats, flashing and shimmering in the sunshine, and waving in the light airs; and such numbers of men-at-arms that the eye might not compass them;

all marshalled fairly beneath the square banners of their lordly and princely leaders, so that they seemed like a moving forest, so upright did they hold their lances. Then came the dense array, on foot, of the Genoese cross-bows, in their plate coats of Italian steel, with terrible arbalasts ; and the unrivalled infantry of Spain, a solid column, bristling like the Greek phalanx of old, with serried lines of spears.

The earth shook under the thick thunder of their horse-hoofs ; the air was alive with the clash and clang of their steel harness ; and all the echoes rang with the shrill flourishes of their trumpets, and the stormy roar of their kettle-drums.

But no terror did such sights or sounds strike to the hearts of that undaunted garrison—the deafening clang of the alarm-bells, the tremendous tocsin answered the kettle-drums and clarions ; and all within the city armed themselves in hot haste. The flower of the French and Spanish chivalry galloped up to skirmish at the barriers, and the iron bolts and quarrels of the Genoese cross-bows fell like a hail-storm, even within the ramparts.

But ere that fierce storm had endured many minutes, up grated the portcullises, down rattled the drawbridges, and as the barriers were withdrawn—banners and spears, and barbed destriers and knightly burgonets poured out from all the city gates at once, and burst in full career upon the skirmishers of the besiegers ; then many a knight was borne to earth, and the chivalry of France and Spain fared ill before the lances of the Bretons ; for they could not bide the brunt, but scattered back, dismantled and discomfited, to their main body ; while the maces and two-handed glaives and battle-axes of the men-at-arms did bloody execution on the Genoese, who were not armed to encounter the charge of steel-clad horse, and to whom no quarter was given, not only that they were foreigners and

Condottieri, but that themselves sparing none, they neither looked for nor received mercy.

At vesper time, on both sides they retired ; the French in great fury at their repulse, the garrison of Hennebon well content with themselves and with that they had done.

On the next day again, with the first rays of the sun, "the French made so very vigorous an attack on the barriers, that those within made a sally. Among them were some of their bravest, who continued the engagement till noon with great courage, so that the assailants retired a little to the rear, carrying with them numbers of their wounded, and leaving behind them a great many dead."

But not for that had they any respite or relaxation ; for the lords of the French were so enraged at the dishonor which had thus twice befallen their arms, that they ordered them up a third time to the attack, in greater numbers than before, swearing that they would win the walls ere the sun should set ; but for all their swearing they did not win that day, nor for all their fighting ; for those of the town were earnest to make a handsome defence, combating under the eyes of their heroic chatelaine ; and so stoutly held they out, that the assailants sent still to the host for succors till their last men were in the field, and none were left, with the baggage and the tents, but a sort of horseboys, scullions, and such rascals.

And still from the hot noontide, till the evening breeze began to blow in cool from the sea, the din of arms, and shouts and war-cries, and the clamor of the wounded, rose from the barricades ; and many gallant deeds of arms were done on that day on both sides, and many doughty blows given and received ; but still the Lord Charles and his men made no way, but lost more than they gained.

And in the end the *los* and glory of the day, for the most daring deed, rested with a woman.

For the countess on that day had clothed herself *cap-a-pie* in armor, and mounted on a war-horse ; though ever till that day she had been tender and delicate among women, of slender symmetry and rare soft beauty, with large blue eyes and a complexion of snow and golden tresses ; and she galloped up and down the streets encouraging the inhabitants to defend themselves honorably—for she had no thought yet but to comfort them and kindle their spirit by her show of example ; nor as yet did she know her own courage, or the strength that resides in the heart of a true woman.

“She had already,” to quote old Froissart, whose account is here so spirited and graphic in his own words, that I prefer giving the narration in that old quaint language, to adding anything, or expanding the striking relation of facts too strong to bear expansion, “she had already ordered the ladies and other women to cut short their kirtles, carry the stones to the ramparts, and throw them on their enemies. She had pots of quicklime brought to her for the same purpose. That same day the countess performed a very gallant deed : she ascended a high tower, to see how her people behaved ; and, having observed that all the lords and others of the army had quitted their tents, and were come to the assault, she immediately descended, mounted her horse, armed as she was, collected three hundred horsemen, sallied out at their head by another gate that was not attacked, and galloping up to the tents of her enemies, cut them down, and set them on fire, without any loss, for there were only servants and boys, who fled upon her approach. As soon as the French saw their camp on fire, and heard the cries, they immediately hastened thither, bawling out, ‘Treason ! Treason !’ so that none remained at the assault. The countess

seeing this, got her men together, and finding that she could not reënter Hennebon without great risk, took another road, leading to the castle of Brest, which is situated near. The Lord Lewis of Spain, who was marshal of the army, had gone to his tents, which were on fire; and, seeing the countess and her company galloping off as fast as they could, he immediately pursued them with a large body of men-at-arms. He gained so fast upon them, that he came up with them, and wounded or slew all that were not well mounted; but the countess, and part of her company, made such speed that they arrived at the castle of Brest, where they were received with great joy.

“On the morrow, the lords of France who had lost their tents and provisions took counsel, if they should not make huts of the branches and leaves of trees near to the town, and were thunderstruck when they heard that the countess herself had planned and executed this enterprise; while those of the town, not knowing what was become of her, were very uneasy; for they were full five days without gaining any intelligence of her. The countess, in the meanwhile, was so active that she assembled from five to six hundred men, well armed and mounted, and with them set out about midnight from Brest, and came straight to Hennebon about sunrise, riding along one side of the enemy's host, until she came to the gates of the castle, which were opened to her: she entered with great triumph and sounds of trumpets and other warlike instruments, to the astonishment of the French, who began arming themselves to make another assault upon the town, while those within mounted the walls to defend it. This attack was very severe, and lasted till past noon. The French lost more than their opponents; and then the lords of France put a stop to it, for their men were killed and wounded to no purpose. They next retreated, and

held a council whether the Lord Charles should not go to besiege the castle of Aurai, which King Arthur had built and inclosed. It was determined that he should march thither, accompanied by the Duke of Bourbon, the Earl of Blois, Sir Robert Bertrand, Marshal of France; and that Sir Hervè de Léon was to remain before Hennebon, with a part of the Genoese under his command, and the Lord Lewis of Spain, the Viscount of Rohan, with the rest of the Genoese and Spaniards. They sent for twelve large machines which they had left at Rennes, to cast stones and annoy the castle of Hennebon; for they perceived that they did not gain any ground by their assaults. The French divided their army into two parts: one remained before Hennebon, and the other marched to besiege the castle of Aurai. The Lord Charles of Blois went to this last place, and quartered all his division in the neighborhood."

With the Count Charles de Blois we have naught to do, save in so much as his doings or sufferings have to do absolutely with the Countess de Montfort; I shall leave him, therefore, to win or lose the castle of Aurai, under the fortune of war, while I shall follow the chances of that noble chatelaine, the countess, who remained, as we shall see, not only beset by enemies without, but by traitors within, the walls of Hennebon.

It may be as well to state here, however, that the Count Charles of Blois did *not* take Aurai, whether it was built by King Arthur or no—which, despite Dom Froissart, is rather more than doubtful—any more than the Lord Lewis d'Espagne took Hennebon, which he came perilous nigh to doing, yet had to depart frustrate.

So soon as the French host had divided itself into two parts, after the taste it had received of the quality of the Breton garrison within the walls of Hennebon, and of the noble character of its heroic chatelaine, they made no attempt any more to

skirmish at the barriers, or to assault the walls, for in good sooth they dared not, but day and night they plied those dreadful engines hurling in mighty beams of wood, steel-headed and ponderous iron bars, and vast blocks of stone, shaking the walls and ramparts, wheresoever they struck them, so that the defenders knew not at what moment they would be breached, and the city laid open to the pitiless foe.

And now the hearts of all, save of that delicate and youthful lady, failed them; and if she had set them before a fair example of chivalric daring, she set them now a fairer of constancy, more heroical than any action; of feminine endurance, and fortitude, and faith, grander than any daring.

The false bishop, Guy de Léon, contrived to leave the town on some false pretext, and hold a parley with his traitor kinsman Hervè de Léon—but for whose villany that bright young dame never had cased her gentle form in steel, nor wielded the mortal sword in warfare. Where traitors are on both sides, treason is wont to win; and so it well nigh proved in this instance; for the bishop returned with offers of free pardon to the garrison, and passports to go whither they would, with their effects unhurt, so they would yield the town to Sir Hervè.

And, though the countess perceived what was on the wind, and besought the lords of Brittany with tears and sighs, that made her but more lovely, “for the love of herself, and of her son; friendless but for them; for the love of God himself, to have pity on her, and faith in heaven, that they should receive succor within three days,” it seemed that she could not prevail.

Nor was there not cause for apprehension; since it was clear to all that the ramparts could not stand one more day’s breaching; and, those once battered down, Hennebon and all within it were at the mercy of the merciless.

The bishop was eloquent, and fear and hope more eloquent

yet ; and ere, long after midnight, the council closed, all minds but those of three, Sir Yves de Tresiquidi, Sir Waleran de Landreman, and the governor of Guincamp, were won over to yield up the city to Sir Hervè ; and even those three doubted. None so hopeful but to trust that to-morrow's conference would be final ; none so strong in courage as to dare support one other day's assault.

All passed the night in doubt and fear ; the countess alone in brave hope, and earnest prayer.

The day dawned, and—as men crowded to the ramparts, gazing towards the camp and the plain where Sir Hervè might be seen approaching with his Genoese, closing up to the town to receive possession—the countess arose from her knees, and she alone of all in Hennebon, turned her eyes towards the sea ; for she alone, of all in Hennebon, had faith in her God.

The sea ! the sea ! it was white with sails, from the mouth almost of the haven, to the dark line of the horizon, flashing to the new-risen sun with lance-heads and clear armor, fluttering with pennoncelles and banners, blazing with embroidered surcoats and emblazoned shields.

And the lady flung her casement wide, and gazed out on her people, in the market-place, along the ramparts, in the tumultuous streets, with dishevelled hair, and disordered raiment, and clasped hands and flushed cheeks, and eyes streaming with tears of joy—"God and St. George !" she cried, in tones that rang to every heart like the notes of a silver trumpet—"God and St. George ! an English fleet ! an English fleet ! It *is* the aid of God !"

And, as the people crowded to the seaward bastions, and saw the great ships rushing in before a leading wind, with their sails all emblazoned with Edward's triple leopards ; and the banners and shields of the English Manny, and of their own

Amauri de Clisson, displayed from the yard-arms, and the immortal red cross blazing, above all, on its argent field, they, too, took up the cry.

"God and St. George! God and St. George! It is the aid of England! it is the aid of God!"

"Thereafter," adds my author, whom I quote once more, for the last time, "when the Governor of Guinecamp, Sir Yves de Tresiquidi, Sir Waleran de Landreman, and the other knights, perceived this succor coming to them, they told the bishop that he might break up his conference, for they were not now inclined to follow his advice. The bishop, Sir Guy de Léon, replied, 'My lords, then our company shall separate; for I will go to him who seems to me to have the clearest right.' Upon which he sent his defiance to the lady, and to all her party, and left the town to inform Sir Hervè de Léon how matters stood. Sir Hervè was much vexed at it, and immediately ordered the largest machine that was with the army to be placed as near the castle as possible, strictly commanding that it should never cease working day or night. He then presented his uncle to the Lord Lewis of Spain, and to the Lord Charles of Blois, who both received him most courteously. The countess, in the meantime, prepared, and hung with tapestry, halls and chambers, to lodge handsomely the lords and barons of England whom she saw coming, and sent out a noble company to meet them. When they were landed, she went herself to give them welcome, respectfully thanking each knight and squire, and led them into the town and castle, that they might have convenient lodging; on the morrow she gave them a magnificent entertainment. All that night, and the following day, the large machine never ceased from casting stones into the town.

"After the entertainment, Sir Walter Manny, who was captain of the English, inquired of the countess the state of the

town, and of the enemy's army. Upon looking out of the window, he said, he had a great inclination to destroy the large machine which was placed so near, and much annoyed them, if any would second him. Sir Yves de Tresiquidi replied, that he would not fail him in this his first expedition; as did also the Lord of Landreman. They went to arm themselves, and sallied quietly out of one of the gates, taking with them three hundred archers; who shot so well, that those who guarded the machine fled; and the men-at-arms who followed the archers, falling upon them, slew the greater part, and broke down and cut in pieces this large machine. They then dashed in among the tents and huts, set fire to them, and killed and wounded many of their enemies before the army was in motion. After this, they made a handsome retreat. When the enemy were mounted and armed, they galloped after them like madmen. Sir Walter Manny, seeing this, exclaimed, 'May I never be embraced by my mistress and dear friend, if I enter castle or fortress before I have unhorsed one of these gallopers.' He then turned round, and pointed his spear towards the enemy, as did the two brothers of Lande-Halle, le Haze de Brabant, Sir Yves de Tresiquidi, Sir Waleran de Landreman, and many others, and spitted the first coursers. Many legs were made to kick the air. Some of their own party were also unhorsed. The conflict became very serious, for reinforcements were perpetually coming from the camp; and the English were obliged to retreat towards the castle, which they did in good order until they came to the castle ditch: there the knights made a stand, until all their men were safely returned. Many brilliant actions, captures, and rescues might have been seen. Those of the town who had not been of the party to destroy the large machine now issued forth, and ranging themselves upon the banks of the ditch, made such good use of their bows, that they

forced the enemy to withdraw, killing many men and horses. The chiefs of the army, perceiving they had the worst of it, and that they were losing men to no purpose, sounded a retreat, and made their men retire to the camp. As soon as they were gone, the townsmen reëntered, and went each to his quarters. The Countess of Montfort came down from the castle to meet them, and with a most cheerful countenance, kissed Sir Walter Manny, and all his companions, one after the other, like a noble and valiant dame."

Such was the heroism of that true lady. And so was her heroism and her faith rewarded. Hennebon was relieved; and the Count Charles de Blois soon died, but died not Duke of Brittany.

Philippa of Hainault:

WIFE OF EDWARD III. OF ENGLAND.

1347.



PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT ;

WIFE OF EDWARD III. OF ENGLAND.

THE great defect of history, so far as regards the general reader, is its habit of systematizing and generalizing, its method of dealing with principles to the almost entire exclusion of persons, of narrating events, effects, and causes in the mass, with little, if any, allusion to individual character or action ; of leaping from war to war, from revolution to revolution, without condescending, for one instant, to customs or costumes, to physical or social anecdotes, unless in the form of a lumping supplemental summary at the end of a chapter, or of an epoch so dry, so bald, and so mixed up with questions of political economy, and other abstruse and unpopular topics, that they are skipped as tedious and irrelevant episodes. It is to their adopting the very reverse of this plan ; to their introducing us personally to the halls, the tournaments, the courts, the camps, the oratories, and the prisons of individual characters of history ; to their letting us hear the very words that they did speak, or might have spoken ; letting us be present at their banquets and beside their biers, that the school of historical dramas introduced by Shakspeare, and of historical romances having their origin in Scott ; and yet more than these the

delightful and artless contemporaneous narratives of the old chroniclers, owe their deathless charm ; and it is to this that Macaulay owes the success of his brilliant and picturesque, though partial and irresponsible history of England.

The consequence of this is, that men and women of the present day, in general, depend for their events and facts of history on the sparse and disjointed memories of the crude and bald abridgments ; of the, themselves, crude and bald generalizations, passing for history, which they picked up as children, abhorring, not unnaturally, that abhorrent task, while their active and actual ideas of historical events as acted realities, and of historical personages as real men and women, walking and standing, eating and drinking, waking and sleeping, wearing clothes and speaking their own thoughts, they owe one and all to the historical plays of Shakspeare, the historical romances of Scott and his followers. In some sort, it is well that this should be so. It would be well altogether, were the readers able to discriminate between that which is true and that which is only truth-like in the dramatical or romantical fiction ; were they, in short, to limit their belief to the costume, the language, and the social scenery only of the fiction, without giving to the events of the narrative, or the actions of the personages, a credence which they were not intended to deserve.

For, we say it distinctly, that no reader of English History, of Hume or Lingard, or even Mackintosh himself, ignorant of the chroniclers, can form half so correct an idea of the usages, the language, the dress, and the demeanor, the daily lives and the daily doings of the English Kings, Barons, and Commons, from the days of King John in the early feudal ages, to those of the immediate predecessors of Elizabeth ; when constitutional government, though irregular as yet and ill-defined, had taken a firm foothold in the land ; and yet, he who should accept as

truths, Shakspeare's representations of the course of events, of the characters and actions of men; forgetful that he wrote according to the bias of his inclinations and his interest, and reviewed history so as to gratify his patrons of the house of Tudor, would err lamentably in his conclusions as to the great and fundamental facts of history.

In like manner, the reader of *Ivanhoe*, of the *Talisman*, and of the *Betrothed*, will gain more insight into the social life, the domestic occupations, the military costume, the state of arts and arms, the civil, religious, and literary condition of the people of England, of all classes, in the times of the crusades—the reader of *Kenilworth* will learn more of the state of England at large, from the court to the cottage, during the heyday of Elizabeth,—and the reader of the *Fair Maid of Perth*, and that noble novel, *Quentin Durward*, of the real life of Scotland and of France, at their respective periods, than the students of all the modern histories of England, France, and Scotland, which still pass as standards, and which boast high names of authors, published from the reign of Anne, inclusively, to those of the elder Georges. At the same time, however, while he may ascribe perfect truth to the general coloring, and to all the details of Scott's gorgeous historical pictures, he must not give implicit credit to his individual portraitures; he must not, we would say, accept events built into tales, having a true historical foundation, in order to connect and ornament the superstructure, as being themselves truths of history.

It is to these delightful creations of the two greatest poetical creators and constructors, in our opinion, who have ever written in any language, Shakspeare and Walter Scott, that we owe our own love of history and historical research. It was the eloquent eulogium of Froissart, ascribed by the latter to one of his most questionable heroes, John Graham of Claverhouse, that first

induced us to open that richest mine of romance and history—of truth stranger and more exciting than fiction; of prose more thrilling, more effective, and more picturesque than poetry, the pages of the ancient chroniclers. It was then and it was thence, that we learned that it is not history, not the living body, with its muscles, its sinews, its energy and action, its doings and sufferings, its smiles and tears, its lights and shadows, of history itself as it was, and as it was written by those who saw it, and lived with, and were a part of it; but the marrowless and arid skeleton into which the schools have boiled it down, and scraped it clean, and distorted it, and set it up with wires, that we find so cold, and base, and arid, so rigid in its lines, so pallid in its hues, so distasteful to the human imagination, so unsatisfactory to the human reasoning. It was then that we began to suspect that the conquerors and prelates, the kings and queens, the knights and ladies, who are so identical in their stiff-starched effigies, as we are introduced to them, row after row, by grave and cold historians, might possibly have been special individualities, with characters and distinctions, each of their own and different from those of others, with human hearts, human hopes, human affections, human fears, and human sorrows; that they might, nay that they *must*, have had their histories of intermingled vice and virtue, of interconnected sin and sorrow; their histories of the human heart of that olden day, with which the human heart of this present day must have much with which it can sympathize; must have much from which it can learn—no word of which will be found in that great compendium of national growth and grandeur, crime and conquest, treason and triumph, debility and downfall, which those, whom the world calls its historians, have given as the history of the world.

Our object it is now, to endeavor to lay before the eyes of our readers the portraiture of some whom they never regarded,

if they have regarded them at all, in any other light than that of historical pageants, in the new guise of real persons ; and first one, not the lowest or the least estimable, to whom two notices, and those of the briefest, are given by Hume, and who, though the wife and mother of two of the greatest and most estimable heroes of the true chivalric era, and herself, in every respect, a true heroine, and a true woman, is scarcely known to this day as a real individual, other than an almost forgotten queen of England.

Philippa, in after days the wife of Edward III., and mother of Edward, the Black Prince of England, was the second daughter of William, Earl of Hainault, and first became acquainted with her future lord, then Prince of Wales, when he was compelled to fly in company with his infamous mother, Isabella, "the wolf of France," of the poet Gray, and her companion in evil, Roger of Mortimer, as well as his father's brother, the Earl of Kent, from the intolerable tyranny and arrogance of the Le de Spencers, who then, by the influence of the younger Sir Hugh, over the weak, imbecile, and luxurious Edward II., held absolute dominion over England, for protection to the court of her father.

The royal fugitives had, at first, found refuge in Paris with King Charles, the brother of Isabella, who was as famous for her beauty as she was infamous for her crimes, and, above all, for her connivance in the atrocious butchery of her hapless husband ; but they had not long received asylum there, before the Le de Spencers, fearing that the queen would be enabled to make a descent on England by aid of her foreign allies, and so to rally the malcontent barons to her standard and overthrow their usurped authority, set all engines at work to bring about her expulsion from the court of her brother. Cardinals and prelates were bought with gold, until the Pope was induced to

command Charles of France, on pain of excommunication, to banish his sister the realm ; nor, it is probable, had the same puissant worker on the minds of men been brought to bear upon the king himself, for we find it recorded by the Lord Berners, in his graphic and eloquent translation of Froissart, that "he was in sagude and will to make his sister to be taken ;" and it is an undoubted fact, that at the warning of her cousin, the Count Robert of Artois, she set out at the dead of night for the empire, apprehending the surrender of herself with Roger Mortimer, the Prince Edward, and the Earl of Kent, into the hands of Sir Hugh Le de Spencer ; and that she there found a refuge first in Ostrevant, at the house of a poor knight, Sir Eustace d' Ambreticourt, afterwards one of her son's paladins, and himself father of one of the first knights of the garter, and thereafter at Valenciennes, in the house of the Earl William of Hainault ; "who, as well as his countess," says old Jehan Froissart, "received her very graciously. Many great feasts were given on this occasion, as no one knew better than the countess how to do the honors of her house. This Earl William had, at that time, four daughters, Margaret, Philippa, Zoar, and Isabella ; the young King Edward,—it must be observed, however, that he was, at this time, only Prince of Wales, and that a fugitive prince, with no very direct prospects of obtaining his succession—paid more court and attention to Philippa than to any of the others ; and the young lady also conversed with him more frequently, and sought his company oftener than any of her sisters."

With this brief record ends all we know or can discover of the courtship of the prince and his fair and virtuous bride, but that their love must have been of that ardent and impulsive character, which is known as love at first sight, cannot be doubted, when we learn that they were only at this time in

company during eight short-winged days, after which the young prince departed with his mother, and such allies as his good cause and the spirit of genuine knight-errantry, which was, at that day, in its prime of real life, mustered to his standard, to strike a blow for his crown, and for the emancipation of his country from the abject state of degradation into which it had fallen.

The uncle of Philippa, Sir John of Hainault, contrary to the opinion of the earl, his brother, and of his council, who deemed the enterprise hazardous, on account of the well known jealousy of the English against foreign interference, resolved to accompany the princely exiles, and aid in reinstating them in their birthright, saying, in reply to all the remonstrances which were made to him, "that he could die but once; that the time was in the will of God; and that all true knights were bound to aid, to the utmost extent of their power, all ladies and damsels driven from their kingdoms, comfortless and forlorn." When the earl had heard this, he said to him—"Dear brother, God forbid that there should be any hindrance to your wish, therefore I give you leave, in the name of God." He then kissed him, and squeezed his hand, in sign of great affection.

How young Philippa parted from her princely lover history has not thought it worth the while to record, but who can doubt that, sprung from men whose every thought, every action, was imbued with the very odor and sanctity of true chivalry, brought up in the midst of all associations high and noble, held far aloof from the contamination of any low, base, or ignoble thought, any lucre-loving mercantile association, she sent him away cheered with serene and soul-stirring encouragement; that she bade him *do* kingly, and, if he might not live a king, die kingly; that she assured him she would rather be the widowed leal-love of one brave, royal Edward, dead under his shield

knightly, than the crowned queen of the greatest king in Christendom. And who can doubt that, when his tall plume faded from her sight, and the gleam and glitter of his panoply was lost in the distance among the mists of evening, the tears dimmed her bright eyes, and darkness fell upon her heart; and she doubted the truth of the high counsel she had been true enough and brave enough to give—for, though she was nobly born, and herself noble, and no recreant to her race, she was a woman, a true woman, and she loved truly and wisely, and for once, not too well; for he, the loved one, deserved and returned, and forgot not ever, but awarded and prized to the last, the true love of Philippa of Hainault.

For once, contrary to all that Shakspeare did ever hear, did ever read, in tale or history, *their* tale of true love *did* run smooth.

The expedition was successful, the faction of the Le de Spencers was put down, and themselves overpowered by a party scarcely less infamous than that of Isabella and Mortimer—for Edward III., yet a minor, and taking no share in the government, fortunately for him elf, took no share of the guilt—suffered by the hands of the common executioner; and soon afterwards, the unhappy and imbecile king ended an ignominious and useless life by a death so ignominious and so horribly atrocious, that, while history itself shrinks from recording it, it has almost altered the sentence of utter condemnation of scorn and detestation, which would otherwise have attached to his memory, into something of that pity which is still nearer akin to contempt than to love. Shortly afterwards, however, Edward, who had attained his eighteenth year, and was already remarkable for intellect and abilities, which might have been termed precocious, but that they did not meet the fate of precocity in premature decay, succeeded in emancipating himself from the

arrogant domination of Mortimer, who, justly doomed by his peers, died the deserved but bloody death of a traitor on the scaffold; and was crowned with a royal diadem, in his palace of Westminster, on Christmas day, among the rejoicings of his subjects of all classes, and the happy auguries, all of which, by a most unusual success for popular-succeeding monarchs, he fulfilled to the letter, for the benefit of his people, the honor of his country, and his own eternal glory.

He had not long sat upon the throne of England, his accession to which was signalized, as was very wont in those days to be the case, by an invasion of the Scots, which he repelled in person, before he bethought himself seriously of the sweet damsel whose heart he had won when but an exiled outlaw prince, and whom, in the spirit of a true knight and true man, he was now resolved to marry, "for that he loved her more dearly, on her own and her father's account, than any other lady."

He sent, therefore, a sumptuous embassy to demand her hand of her father, the Earl of Hainault; and having obtained a dispensation from the Pope, which was necessary on account of their near relationship, their mothers being cousins-german, married her by procuration at Valenciennes; after which she was escorted to London by her uncle, Sir John of Hainault, and crowned amongst great rejoicings of the people, and "great crowds of the nobility, and feasting and tournaments, and sumptuous entertainments every day, which lasted three weeks."

Immediately on her being thus elevated to the throne of a foreign country, she had the rare wisdom—most rare, indeed, among crowned heads in the female line—to adjudge herself entirely and wholly to the country of which she had become one, to devote herself to studying the interests and gaining the

affections of her people, and to identify herself wholly with England by becoming herself an Englishwoman, as she was already an English queen. Consequently, although but a little while before her accession and coronation there had been sharp feuds and even actual hostility between the English archers—a force peculiarly national, English, and even Saxon in their origin, and as such embodying the prejudices and expressing the feelings of the people—and the Hainaulters, with her own honored uncle at their head, we hear of no bickerings or jealousies, much less of any partialities on the Queen's part toward her own kin or countrymen—that block on which so many queens have stumbled to their own disastrous downfall—that we can find that “but few of *our* countrymen,” as Froissart writes, who was himself a Hainaulter born, and an especially grateful servant of Philippa—“remained with the young queen; among whom was a youth called Wastelet de Mauny, to attend on and carve for her, who performed afterward so many gallant deeds of arms, in such various different places, that they are not to be counted.”

To be the wife of such a champion, and such a king as Edward, the mother and instructor of such a son as the Black Prince—the only two men of actual existence, with the exception of Bayard, *le sans pen et sans reproach*, and the good and gallant Philip Sidney, who have ever realized the beau-ideal of knight-errantry, and the blended greatness and prowess of true chivalry, were glory enough for any one woman; but she added to this to be the judicious and constant, as well as consistent rewarder of true merit, whether in art or in arms; to be the defender of her husband's crown and of her adopted country; to show that, like her great successor, the lionlike Elizabeth, though she were “but a weak woman, she had a man's heart in her bosom, and that man's a king of England”—for she,

too, when her liege lord and sovereign was abroad, fleshing his victorious sword in the heart of France, feared not to mount the war-horse and gird the steel upon her thigh, and to address her troops, on the eve of battle, with words of fire, that lighted up an equal daring in the heart of the meanest groom and of the proudest earl that fought at Neville's cross, on English soil against a Scottish foeman, and caused the capture of a Scottish king, not many days before the monarch of the French yielded himself, conquered in chivalry and courtesy alike, to the victorious prowess of her son.

We are no admirers, not we, of military glory, as attached to women. We believe that the *mission* of women, as the slang of the present day runs, is a mission to the home and the hearth, to the fireside and the cradle, to the nursery and the sick bed—that it is a mission to civilize, and humanize, and soften, not to teach or to preach or to conquer—that it is a mission to cheer the toils, comfort the homes, sympathize with the griefs, and by affectionate and gentle firmness to maintain the courage of man against the shocks of this world, and the apprehensions of the next. We believe, in a word, that the God of nature, as nature itself indicates, intended them to be the mothers and the wives of men, to love and to be loved, to lean on the superior hardihood of man, and to soften and adorn his hardness as the honeysuckle embellishes the oak, to which it clings for shelter and support. We believe that the rights of women are to be held highest and holiest of human things, above all pollution, aloof from all insult, free from all harm, to be loved, cherished, honored, worshipped next below God—but neither to be orators nor statesmen, heads of firms nor chiefs of battalions, champions of aristocracy nor propagandists of liberty. We have no sympathy with your gallant dragoonesses of modern Hungary or modern Poland, no respect for your Miss-Captain

of Hussars, Emily *this*, or Countess-General of Artillery, Lady Sarah *that*—we believe that if women choose voluntarily to take to the work of men, and make themselves men, they have no right to complain when they share the fate of men. Let them follow squadrons, if they will, cheer their wounded, sustain their dying husbands; so shall they earn that deathless renown, as true heroines, which clings to the Baroness de Reidesell, and the Lady Harriet Acland, of Saratoga and Stillwater—but let them not presume to lead squadrons and unsex themselves, descending into soldiers, else shall they merit their true name of termagants and viragoes, and “taking to the sword shall die by the sword,” whether on the field or on the scaffold, by us at least unpitied and despised, not honored.

To all rules, however, there are exceptions—and the exception to this rule is this, that when by accident of position, of rank, or of circumstance, the woman is elevated or compelled into such eminence or deadly necessity of trust, as compels her to do actual battle in defence of those committed to her charge, she is not only absolved of the charge of unsexing herself, of the suspicion of unwomanly ambition for notoriety and loud report, of yet more unwomanly love for masculine attire, masculine display, perhaps masculine thirst for blood and glory, but is entitled to the highest praise for daring, at the call of a higher moral duty, to “overstep the modesty of nature,” and forgetful of the gentleness of woman to put on the fiery courage and the stern endurance of man, for daring, in a word, “to do her duty in that sphere of life to which it has pleased God to call her.”

Such was the position of Philippa, when her brave husband and her brave son afar off in foreign lands, doing battle for their country, herself appointed the vicegerent of the crown and regent of the realm, with a foreign enemy polluting Eng-

lish soil with their footsteps, and foreign banners flouting the free wind of England, she buckled the lion casque over her matron pillet, and drew the sword, and breathed the breath of liberty into the hearts of all who heard her thrilling words on that wild plain of Cumberland, and filled the meanest of her followers with that heaven-reaching valor which makes triumph certain.

Such was the position of Elizabeth, when she rode her war-horse, in full caparison, along the mustered train-bands and militia of her realm, weak-seeming bulwark for the liberties and the religion of her land, against the unconquered veterans of the low country, the far famed Spanish infantry, the freight of the invincible Armada, and swore that she would fight, and if she could not live, then die, a king of England.

Such was the position of Maria Theresa, when she drew her sabre, on the guarded mount, all as she harangued her tumultuous legions of noble cavalry, before the unhallowed partition of her realm, and her words of flame were answered by the unanimous cry, while every sword leaped from its scabbard, through that mighty host, *moriamur, moriamur, pro rege nostro, Maria Theresa.*"

Such is the position of the backwoodsman's wife ; Kentucky and Tennessee, the dark and bloody ground, can tell of many a one who, when alone at dead of night, or with her terrified and helpless little ones only around, startled from sleep by the appalling sounds of the war-whoop, far pealing through the arches of the forest, has snatched the weapons of her absent husband, and done victorious battle for her hearth and her home against the fierce and wily savage.

And cold must be his heart, and weak his glow of manly spirit, who does not in the same degree admire, and venerate, and almost canonize such true examples of pure, legitimate, and

holy feminine heroism, as he doubts, and tries, and finally condemns, rejects as base and spurious, that false, fierce, unfeminine spirit, which, assuming the garb of heroism to cover ambition and love of notoriety, leaps to arms, backs chargers, and literally slays men in hand to hand encounter, only to cringe and quail—while the gulled, gaping mob, shrieks horror at the sight—when taken in the soldier's self-elected trade, they are compelled to abide by the soldier's doom.

But such was not the character, such not the action of the gentle and brave Philippa. Compelled by her rank and state to defend her husband's crown, and son's hereditary kingdom, she came forward for one little moment, she showed herself for one passing glance able to perform her duties, even if these duties were the duties of a man, and the next, when victorious over her foes, and the saviour of her country and her crown, retired into the gentle and unassuming routine of her sweet and humble life, and is next found—as we find recorded in history—as crossing over the British channel, “to throw herself at the feet of the indignant king, and beg with tears the lives of the six rebellious burgesses of Calais, doomed to a base death on the gallows, by the wrath of the unrelenting victor.”

We care not that this anecdote has no foundation in history—as it has very clearly been proved to have none, from actual and direct testimony, as well as from the internal evidence of the legend—for, though it is totally inconsistent with the character of Edward III., who, on no single occasion, is known to have acted otherwise than generously, mercifully, and knightly to all men, whether of high or low degree, and who in that very siege of Calais had shown proof of mercy, very unusual even in the comparatively humane warfare of modern times, in permitting the unwarlike inhabitants of the city to withdraw themselves from the hardships and sufferings of a beleaguered

city, after the blockade had been completed—still it is evident that no contemporaneous writer could have invented such an anecdote had it been very much at variance with the spirit of the times, or at all inconsistent with the known character of the princess whom he desired to laud, that she should “with tears have said, ‘Ah, gentle sir, since I have crossed the sea with great danger to see you, I have never asked you one favor; now, I most humbly ask as a gift, for the sake of the Son of the blessed Mary, and for your love to me, that you will be merciful to these six men;’” or, that “the king should have looked at her for some time in silence, and then said, ‘Ah, lady, that you had been anywhere else than here; you have entreated in such a manner that I cannot refuse you; I therefore give them to you, do as you please with them.’” The anecdote is known, proved, and by all historians admitted to be untrue; it is therefore unworthy of a place in history, except as a foot note, illustrative of the spirit of the times, and the character by her own contemporaries ascribed and believed to belong to Philippa of Hainault—to her honor it was composed, and in her honor it ought in some sort to hold good, since it is clearly what she was capable of doing, might well have done, would probably have done had it been in her way so to do, and was actually believed to have done by her servant and historiographer.

From this time forth we hear little of her, a proof that her life flowed evenly and serenely towards its close; it is the tortured and the turbulent waters that are the most loudly bruted—those which are most placid, which most brilliantly reflect the hues of heaven, are the peaceful and the silent. She lived to see her husband, who never varied from his love for her, or was seduced from allegiance to her beauty by younger or more brilliant charms; the greatest king in Christendom; she lived to see her son, the Black Prince, the most famous champion, the

bravest, gentlest, best knight in the world, the glory of his native land, and the wonder of the world, as he lives in his great renown to this day, for all the real attributes of the best and brightest of earthly things—true Christian chivalry; a gentleman, a soldier, a noble, a man, a Christian, and a knight *par excellence*, for ever.

Happy as she had been in her life, she was no less happy in her death, *for she survived nothing*—neither friends nor fame, neither happiness nor love. She died as she had lived, the honored of her children, the beloved of her husband, the adored of her adopted country, the regretted of all—the best woman, the best queen of her own day—almost the best of any.

Hear what fell out when this lovely woman passed away, for the passage which relates to it is one of the gems of Froissart, in the quaint, old, simple, Saxon English, of his best, if first translator, Johan Bouchier, Lord Berners.

“There fell in Englande a heavy case and a common, howbeit it was right pyteouse for the kinge, his children, and all his realm. For the good queene of Englande, that so many good deeds had done in her tyme, and so many knights succored, and ladyes and damosels comforted, and had so largely departed of her goods to her people, and naturally loved always the nation of Heynaulte, the country where she was born. She fell sick in the castle of Wyndstore, the which sickness continued on her so long that *there was no remedy but dethe*. And the good ladye, when she knew and perceived that there was with her no remedy but dethe, she deigned to speke with the king, her husbande. And when he was before her, she put out of her bed her right hand, and took the king by his right hand, who was right sorrowful in his heart. Then she said, ‘Sir, we have in peace, joy, and great prosperity, used all our time together. Sir, now, I pray you, at our departing, that ye will grant me three

desires.' The kinge, right sorrowfully weeping, said, 'Madame, desire what ye will; I will grant it.' 'Sir,' said she, 'I require of you, first of all that all, manner of people, and as I shall have dealt with in merchandise, in this side of the sea or beyond it, that it may please you to pay every thing that I owe them or any other. And secondly, sir, all such ordnance and promises as I have made to the churches, as well of this country as beyond the sea, whereas I have had any devotion, that it may please you to accomplish and fulfil the same. Thirdly, sir, I require you that it may please you to take none other sepulture, whensoever it shall please God to take you out of this transitory life, but beside me in Westminster.' The kinge, all weeping, said, 'Madame, I grant you your desire.' Then the good ladye and queene made on her the sign of the cross, and commended the king, her husband, to God, and her youngest son, Thomas, who was then beside her. And anone, after, she yielded up the spirit, the which I believe surely the holy angels received with great joy up to heaven, for in all her life she did neither in thought nor deed thing whereby to lose (hurt) her soul, as far as any creature could know. Thus the good queene of England died, in the year of our Lord MCCCLXIX. in the vigil of our lady, in the myddle of August. Rest to her soul."

STUDY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

THEORY OF THE

The Forest of Le Mans,

OR,

THE FRENZY OF CHARLES VI.

1387.

TABLE II - 1977

17. 1977 - 1978

THE FOREST OF LE MANS; OR, THE FRENZY OF CHARLES VI.

It was a blazing day in August. For above six weeks the earth had been scourged with intolerable heat; not a drop of rain had fallen to refresh the fading verdure, or swell the channels of the wasted rivulets. The meadows and the pasturelands of Brittany were as sere and yellow as the sands of the Olonne; the foliage of the forests had put on, two months before their time, the melancholy tints of autumn. A few miserable, half-starved cattle were to be seen, the only signs of life, panting beneath the scanty shelter of the half-denuded trees, or standing, fetlock-deep, in the muddy hollows which a little while before had been cool ponds and watering places. No song of birds was to be heard in the deserted woodlands; all was sad, solitary, silent.

From the horizon to the zenith there was not a cloud so large as a man's hand in the lurid sky, which shone with a strange brassy glare, as if the light were transmitted through a dusty haze, amid which the blood-red sun stood portentous, "shorn of his beams," yet withering and scorching everything within the sphere of his malign influence.

Not a breath of wind moved the torpid air—not a leaf, not a blade of grass quivered.

All that preserved its green unaltered over a vast tract of country was the dark prickly furze, patient of all extremes of heat or cold, the long sprays of the Spanish broom, child of the arid waste, the stunted furs which spotted, singly or in clumps, the surface of that blasted heath, and the heavy masses of almost black pine-forest, which gloomed on the level horizon.

The only sounds were the monotonous and droning cry of the field-cricket, and the snapping of the seed-pods of the broom, which crackled away continually like a pigmy fusillade under the hot noon-tide. If the casual passage of a dull and weary ox, or the stealthy tread of the fox, the wild-cat, or the wolf of the neighboring forest, disturbed the deep dust, which lay six inches deep on the many unfenced roads which meandered through those sterile commons, it rose thick and dark, and hung there long, fanned away by no breath of air, and immovable as though it were a point of question whether the earthy particles, or the atmosphere on which they seemed upborne, were the heavier.

Such was the day, most strange, and most unfit, on which it was determined that a royal army—one of those stupendous chevauchées of mail-clad men-at-arms—numbering thousands upon thousands of high-born cavalry, which formed the feudal array—the ban and arrière ban of France—should take the field.

Charles the Sixth, the unhappy king of France, who but twelve years before had mounted the throne with auguries so proud and happy, whose gay youth had been blessed with visions ominous of great glory, even while his mad orgies were making the sepulchral vaults of St. Denys to resound with revelry and riot, now a king in little more than name, betrayed by whom he should most have trusted, deserted by his nearest relatives, alone among traitors, had resolved—at length resolved

when it was too late, to assert his royalty and rights, to be—no longer seem—a king.

A few months before an atrocious crime had been committed in the streets of Paris, on the holy festival of the Fête Dieu, almost within ear-shot of the palace, whence the intended victim had scarce departed, leaving the presence of the king. "This was an attack of expiring feudality upon feudal right, traitorously made by an *arrière vassal* on his suzerain's office, within the very palace of his suzerain."* That was a villanous night attack, a murderous ambuscade, executed under the instigation, if not by the positive orders of the Duke of Brittany—the secret enemy of France, and sworn friend of the English.

The victim of this base outrage was Sir Oliver le Clisson, High Constable of France, and the only man, perhaps, in all his realm on whom the unfortunate monarch could really place reliance; for his uncles, the Dukes of Burgundy and Berry, were his ill-counsellors at least, and ill-wishers, while his own brother, the young and handsome Duke of Orleans, recently espoused to the beautiful daughter of the Duke of Milan, was neither firm friend, nor sure dependence.

By these men, and by all the secret evil-doers and enemies of the king, Clisson was mortally hated, and in addition feared.

"In France,† he was Constable, the king's sword against the barons; in Brittany, on the contrary, he was the leader of the barons against the duke. Closely allied to the houses of Anjou and Penthièvre, he only waited his opportunity to expel this duke, and dismiss him to his friends the English. The duke, who knew De Clisson thoroughly, lived in constant fear of him,

* Michelet's History of France, book viii., chap. iii.

† Ibid., book viii., chap. iii.

and dreamed only of the terrible man with one eye, could never forgive himself for having had his enemy within his hands—having held him, and not having had the courage to make away with him. Now there was one who had an interest in Clisson's death, having everything to fear from the Constable, and the house of Anjou. This was an Anquin lord, Pierre du Craon, who, by his theft of the treasures of the Duke of Anjou, his master, during his Neapolitan expedition, was the cause of his perishing unsuccored. His widow never lost sight of this man; and Clisson, the ally of the house of Anjou, never met the thief without treating him as he deserved.

"These two fears, these two hates, came to an understanding. Craon promised the Duke of Brittany to rid him of Clisson. Returning secretly to Paris, he entered the city by night—the gates being constantly open since the punishment of the Mailotins. He filled his hotel in the market St. Jean with cut-throats, and here they waited many days with doors and windows closed. At last, on the 13th of June, the Fête Dieu, a grand gala being given in the hotel Saint Paul, with jousts, supper, and dances, till after midnight, the Constable returned from it almost alone to his hotel, Rue de Paradis. The vast and silent Marais, desert enough now, was much more so then; great hotels, gardens, and convents being scattered here and there over it. Craon stationed himself on horseback, with forty bandits, at the corner of the rue St. Catherine. On Clisson's coming up, they extinguished their torches, and fell upon him. At first the Constable took it to be a freak of the king's younger brother. But Craon would add to death the bitter pang of letting him know by whose hand he died. 'I am your enemy,' he cried, 'I am Pierre de Craon.'

"The Constable, who had no other weapon than a small cutlass, defended himself as long as he could, but at length a

blow on the head felled him, and, in falling, he luckily struck against a half-open door—a baker's, who was heating his oven, the night being far advanced. He had fallen head-foremost, half into the shop, so that to complete the murder, it would have been necessary to enter it. But not one of the forty durst alight; and preferring to believe that the deed was done, they escaped at full gallop through the gate St. Antoine.

“The news was instantly brought to the king, who had retired to bed. He would not wait to dress, but throwing a cloak over him, hurried off without waiting for his attendants. He found the Constable come to himself, and promised that he would avenge him, swearing that nothing should ever be more dearly paid.

“Meanwhile the murderer had secreted himself in his castle of Sable au Maine, and then in some secret nook of Brittany. The king's uncles, who were overjoyed at the event, and who had some intimation of it beforehand, to put off the king and gain time, asserted that Craon was in Spain. But the king was not to be deceived; it was the Duke of Brittany whom he desired to punish.”

Some time had elapsed since the perpetration of the foul deed of assassination, so great was the desire of the king's uncles to shelter the miscreant, whose crime they in sooth regarded as good service, and their reluctance to proceed to extremities against the Duke of Brittany, who was of their party, and their good friend.

But the king was very urgent, and for once resolute in his will, so that nothing could make him change it. For he was determined to drive the Duke of Brittany from his duchy, and nominate a governor over it till his children should be of age, that it might be restored to them. And it was of no avail that while the king tarried at Le Mans, his uncles caused a letter to

be written to him by the Lady Jolande de Bar, Queen of Aragon, and cousin-german of the King of France, informing him that she had caused to be arrested, and detained in prison at Barcelona, a French knight, who had come thither with a handsome array, intending to pass the sea to Naples, and whom she believed to be Sir Pierre de Craon. The king, however, was not to be deceived, but persisted in his resolve; and his uncles could not refuse to accompany their sovereign with their vassals, since they were bound in honor to do so; the rather that in order "to put an end to their repugnances and delays, he had restored to the Duke de Berri that Languedoc, of which he had on such just grounds deprived him."*

Now, although the king had been for some time past languishing from the effects of a raging fever, from which he was not well recovered, and was, moreover, heart-sick with impatience and anger at the delays imposed upon him by his traitorous kinsmen, he would now be held back no longer; nor would he listen to any discussions, but ordered the oriflamme to be unfurled, for that on the morrow he would surely march.

On the preceding evening he had sent for the marshals of his army to his chamber, and ordered them to have the men-at-arms ready by early morn to march to Angers; "For," he added, "we have determined never to return from Brittany until we have destroyed the traitors who give us so much trouble."

And in the morning of the terrible and oppressive August day which I have described, in the middle of the month, when the sun has the greatest force, after having heard mass and drunk a cup, the king mounted his horse, and took his way into the forest of Le Mans, accompanied by all the following of his realm; his uncles, with their vassals, and all the great feudato-

* Michelet's France, *ut sup.*

ries of the kingdom, and men-at-arms, from Artois, Beauvais, Fermandois, and Picardy, and other distant countries ; in seeming, a right royal host. And yet, for all that, Charles was alone with all that glorious following—alone in the midst of traitors. The men were about him, by whose very hands, or at whose instigation, his Constable had been attacked and stricken down at his own palace-gates, and was it likely that such should be over^{scrupulous} about laying hands on him !

During the whole of his detention at Mans, the king had labored hard at the council, where he had met more opposition than assistance ; he was feeble both in mind and body, daily attacked by fever fits, which were increased by any contradiction or fatigue ; and these his counsellors thrust upon him daily. No wonder if his intellects were at times disordered and obscured—for it would seem they would have it so ; and the more that they observed his looks, wild and wandering, or his words strange and inconsistent, the more they affronted his desires and thwarted him.

Moreover, he felt, although he gave no inch to the feeling, that he was beset with domestic enemies ; that he was marked out by the men of his own blood, by the nobles of his realm, the clergy, the whole people, for hatred—perhaps for destruction. “ What, however, had he done, to be thus hated by all, he who hated none, but rather loved all the world ? his desires were for the alleviation of his people’s burdens—at least his heart was good ; and this all the right-minded knew full well.”

In this state of mind and body, the young king mounted his horse between nine and ten o’clock of the morning, and rode forth from Le Mans, followed by the whole of his mighty cavalcade, across a wide and sandy plain, exposed to the full glare of the scorching sun. And the dust surged up in clouds from beneath the thousands of trampling hoofs, and hung fixed in the

sweltering and stirless atmosphere, like the dread crimson cloud that heralds the deadly simoom of the Arabian desert, stifling and almost intolerable to both man and beast.

The horses, although travelling at a foot's pace only, literally sprinkled the soil with the sweat that streamed from their limbs—the stoutest of the men-at-arms could scarcely endure the weight of their solid panoply, while the younger and weaker of their number fainted from heat, or fell from their saddles, overdone by the excess of toil. So insufferable, in fact, was the closeness of the weather, that it was found utterly impossible, not only to march in order, or to preserve anything like regular rank, but even to hold together in compact bodies. And, consequently, as they were marching through a friendly territory, with no enemy within many leagues' distance, and as the country—open, level, unencumbered by fences, and traversed by innumerable roads, or rather tracks, running parallel one to the other, over the heaths and commons—favored such operations, the army subdivided itself into various bands, columns, and divisions, each under the banner of its own lord or leader, and each marching, at its own pleasure, without concert or order, towards a common point.

Nor, when the vanguard entered the great wooded tract, known as the forest of Le Mans, was the case materially altered. For, in the first place, the woodland, like the commons, was intersected by numerous wood-paths and glades, used by the charcoal-burners; and, in the second, except in rare spots, where the underwood grew into tangled thickets, or masses of large timber-trees had overcrowded the coppice, the forest was composed for the most part of thin straggling underwood, scattered more or less sparsely over barrens overspread with dwarf heather, fern, and broom, such as offered no impediment to the progress of an array so open and loose, not to say undis-

ciplined, as that of a chevauchée of feudal horse. Along the principal causeway only, which ran in a direct line across the forest, was the woodland dense and continuous; but here, and on either side, for a breadth of a quarter of a mile, a dense and almost impenetrable pine-wood still prevailed, with trees so tall and shadowy, that at high noon the road was gloomy, and at early evening dark as midnight.

At a distance, the deep green shadows of this avenue seemed to promise something of coolness and relief from the hourly-increasing rage of the sunbeams, and to it therefore the king directed his way, followed only by a few of his personal attendants, and some men-at-arms of his immediate guard.

It is hardly possible, on reviewing the history of the singular occurrences which followed, not to believe that deep treason was intended on this occasion to the unhappy monarch; and that, although in some degree hideously successful, the plans of the conspirators were frustrated, or, at least, fell out differently from what they intended, since the final consequences of the catastrophe were such as could scarcely have been contemplated, and were, moreover, too distant and too little certain to have been devised beforehand.

Certain it is, that no advanced party was thrown forward—no flankers detached to scour the woods on either hand—no precautions taken against treachery or ambuscade, in a place singularly adapted for the harbor of lurking assassins, and in an age when no place was safe to those in power, and when precautions, the strictest and most ceremonious, were of daily custom.

No friend, moreover, no man of rank, or councillor, with whom he could hold converse, by which to while away the weariness of the hot and tedious march, or to distract the heavy

and distempered gloom which weighed on his spirits, accompanied him, or was within call.

It can hardly be imagined that he was not so left alone of set purpose ; so that, whatever might occur—and it was probably well known that something would occur—there should be no ready aid at hand, nor any witnesses.

So the king rode along, slowly, in gloom—in distempered spirits—in dreamy and unsettled mood. It must be remembered, that, from his childhood, he had been different from other children, that he had ever a strange and visionary turn of mind, that he believed himself to have seen visions and have held intercourse with things supernatural.

Hunting the stag some twelve years before in the forest of Senlis, he had encountered a miraculous deer, which had survived to display the golden collar with which it had been decorated by Julius Cæsar, fourteen centuries ago, to the infant king of Christendom—who was destined, his flattering courtiers swore, to emulate the glories of the first emperor of Rome.

From that day the mystic stag had been his chosen emblem ; from that day the wildest mysticism of occult science, of mythical romance, of awful superstition had laid hold of him ; and that they doubtless knew full well, and counted on, who devised that which followed. There is a narrow, scanty rill, which traverses that wide, thirsty tract, fed by perennial sources, crossing the high road not many miles from Le Mans, and nourishing along its banks to the present day a heavy coppice of alders and water-willows. Even in that burning drought its shallow channel, too insignificant to require a bridge which should span it, contained a small thread of water.

A huge oak tree completely overhung it, and the path beneath its heavy umbrage was cool with grateful exhalations from the brooklet.

The king, merciful to his beast by nature—and the horse he rode was a favorite—drew him in as he set his fore-feet in the channel, and casting his reins down upon his glossy neck, suffered him to bend down his head and drink, smiling the while with a faint, melancholy smile at the eagerness with which he plunged his muzzle into the cool current, and clapping him on his neck with his ungloved hand. Seeing that the king paused, his pages, who rode next behind him, halted at some hundred yards' distance, and the men-at-arms again a little space behind them, unwilling to intrude upon the monarch in his mood of gloom.

Suddenly, a wild, prolonged, plaintive wail arose from the thicket, more like to the dolorous howl of some animal in mortal suffering than to any sound of human agony or sorrow; and before any one might even surmise what was the meaning of the outcry, a hideous apparition glided out from the forest shadows, and confronted the astounded monarch.

It was a tall, emaciated figure of a man, barefooted and bareheaded, with wild, knotted elf-locks, hollow-eyed, hollow-cheeked, white-lipped, liker to an animated corpse than to any living thing. He was clad in a miserable cassock of white russet, and nothing can be imagined more deplorable than his whole aspect and condition—the like of him was never seen before that day, nor was he ever seen or heard tell of by any after it.

As he confronted the king, startling his horse, which threw up its head at the strange vision, he caught the reins boldly; and the charger, one of the bravest and most fiery that was ever backed of man, stood snorting, with wide eyes and expanded nostrils, trembling in every limb, sweating at every pore.

"Ride back!" he cried, in a low, deep, monotonous voice, "ride back, noble king. You are betrayed!—betrayed!"

And whether it was an echo, or an accomplice, or something beyond nature, a deep response, "Betrayed! betrayed!" appeared to the distempered senses of the king—who sat in his saddle, rigid, glaring on his strange visitant like one stricken with catalepsy—to resound through the thickets. But, at this moment, some of the men-at-arms came up at the gallop, and beat the hands and bare arms of the man, maniac, impostor, or seer—be he which he might—until he let go his hold, and the terrified horse sprang forward, and bore his royal master onward, almost unconscious as it seemed of all that had passed, and plunged in profound meditation.

But no one stayed to arrest or question that strange personage—it might be, because no persons of authority were at hand; it might be, because the men-at-arms were themselves shaken by superstitious fancies; it might be because they were so ordered.

And the figure ran along the way, beside the army, until the men-at-arms had all passed him by, still waving his arms aloft, and screaming in that dismal, doleful tone—"Ride back, ride back, sir king! betrayed! betrayed!" and none harmed him, nor meddled with him at all. But when the last men-at-arms had outstripped and passed him by, some of them looked back—it may be trembling—and he had disappeared; nor from that day did any human eyes behold him.

But the king rode on—for none came near to comfort him, or converse with him, or question him of what had passed; not his uncles, nor his brother of Orleans, nor any of his nobles—on "through the weary forest, stunted and affording no shade; on, into the sultry heaths and dazzling mirages of southern sand"*—solitary, alone, with a multitude around him.

* Michelet's France.

It was high noon, when they cleared the forest and entered on the vast, open plains; on which, as all the separate bands defiled out of the forest, and spread out, as best they might, to avoid the dust and the pressure of the multitude, all might behold each other, and each one the king, his master.

And the sun was resplendent, and the heat was intolerable; so that there was none so well used to arms but he suffered by it fearfully, and many of the horses perished.

At this time the king rode by himself, as before, to avoid the dust, and the Dukes of Berri and Burgundy, conversing together, kept on his left hand, at about two acres' distance from him. The other lords—such as the Count de la Marche, Sir James of Bourbon, Sir Charles d'Albret, Sir Philip d'Artois, Sir Henry and Sir Philip de Bar, Sir Peter de Navarre—rode in different paths. The Duke of Bourbon, the Lord de Coucy, Sir Charles d'Angers, the Baron d'Ivry, were following at a gentle pace, talking together, at some distance from the king, nothing suspecting, as it seemed, the misfortune that should befall him.

The sandy plain reflected the heat fearfully; and, as it fell out, the king was dressed, or buried rather, in a dress of black velvet, and wore on his head "only a single hood of crimson, ornamented with a chaplet of beautiful pearls, which the queen had given him on leaving her. He was followed by one of his pages, who had a Montauban cap of polished steel upon his head, that glittered in the sun; and behind him another page rode on horseback, carrying a vermilion-coloured lance, enveloped with silk, for the king, the head of which lance was broad, sharp, and bright.

"As they were thus riding, the pages—who were but children—grew negligent of themselves and their horses; and the one who bore the lance fell asleep, and forgetful of what he had

in his hand, let it fall on the casque of the page before him, which made both the casque and the lance ring loudly.”*

At the clash and glimmer of the steel, the king's frame was shaken as if by a convulsive spasm, and he started in his saddle, and erected his head, which had hung drooping on his breast, and glared about him for a moment with the clear, keen glance of an awakened eagle; he gathered up his reins, giving his horse the spur, and made a demivolt, unsheathing his sword as he did so, and flashing it in the hot sunlight.

“Forward!” he shouted. “Forward, and set on! God and Saint Denys! Set upon these traitors who would sell us!”

And, with the words, he dashed between the terrified pages, who scattered as they saw him coming, and charged full upon the knights who followed him, reining his horse, and dealing sweeping blows with his sword from side to side at all whom he approached; for he was quite distraught, and fancied that all around him were his enemies. The Duke of Orleans, his brother, saw him coming, and fled in terror; for he saw that the king knew him not, or, perhaps, fancied that he knew him too well. And Charles spurred after him at full speed, shouting and gaining on him at every stride of his horse—for he was the better mounted. And of a surety, he had there, on that day, overtaken and slain him, but that he turned and winded his horse, and so eluded him; and now, as he did so, some knights or men-at-arms rode in between and interposed themselves—not resisting the king or defending themselves, but striving to avoid him. But right dearly did they pay for their gallantry and devotion: for the king was in no sort himself, but was as one possessed; and he struck hard blows with his sword, which was well tempered of fine Bordeaux steel, and cut

* Froissart's Chronicles, vol. iv., c. 45.

down all who crossed his path—four gallant men-at-arms, who all died afterwards of the wounds which he dealt them; and lastly a good knight of Gascony, the bastard of Polignac, whom he slew outright at a single blow.

And there was a mighty concourse of men galloping in all directions, and shouting; for those who were near at hand, and saw what was to do, spurred this way and that—some striving to avoid the king, and some to lay hold on him, that he might do no more evil, and called to each other that he should do likewise; and they who were at a distance, and might not see, fancied that it was a deer or a hare that they were hunting—but it was the king. And they, too, shouted and galloped; and the wilder the tumult waxed the madder grew the king; until, at length, “when he was quite jaded and streaming with sweat, and his horse in a lather from fatigue, a Norman knight, who was one of his chamberlains and much beloved by him, came behind and caught him in his arms, though he had his sword still in his hand. When he was thus held, all the other lords came up, and took the sword from him. He was dismounted, and gently laid on the ground, that his jerkin might be stripped from him, to give him more air and cool him.”*

They had done better and shown more mercy had they slain him on that day; for, thenceforth, his life was crueller to him and sadder than any death had been, how cruel soever—and those who were the causes of it God will judge, for he knoweth.

Then they laid him on his litter, and carried him back to Le Mans; and the marshals called back the van, and told them that the expedition was at an end for that season.

But, as they returned, the word passed among the knights and men-at-arms, how, that “to ruin France, the king was poisoned, or bewitched, before he left Le Mans this morning.”

* Froissart's Chronicles, vol. iv., c. 45.

And the word reached the ears of the Duke of Orleans and the princes of the blood-royal. So when they reached Le Mans, they questioned his physicians what was his distemper; and they laid it on his fever, and cleared themselves honestly—showing that they had advised him to rest quiet, and forbear from riding in the heat, but he would not.

And they inquired of his chamberlain and butler, Sir Robert de Lignac and Robert Tulles, who had given him his last wine and tasted it, and they cleared themselves, and brought bottles of the same wine which he had drunk of, and proffered themselves to drink.

“Then said the Duke of Berry—

“‘We are debating here about nothing. The king is poisoned, or bewitched only by bad advisers—but it is not time, at present, to talk of these matters. Let us bear the misfortune as well as we can for the moment.’

“And the Duke of Burgundy said—

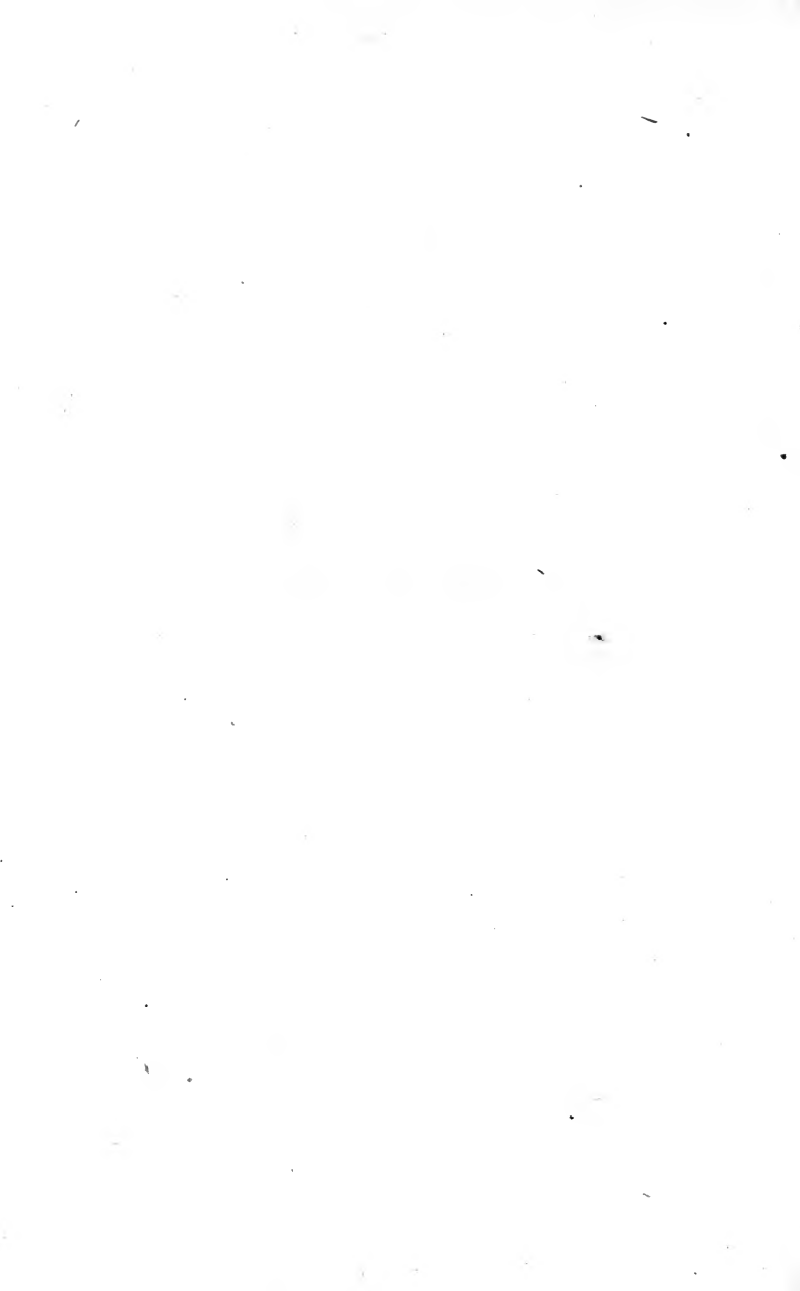
“‘We must return to Paris—the expedition is at an end.’

“They did not then say all they thought; but they made their intentions very apparent to those who were not in their good graces, on their return to Paris.”*

* Froissart's Chronicles, vol. iv., c. 45.

The Maid of Orleans :

1429.



THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

It is not within the compass of argument to maintain that the progress of society, the advance of civilization, and the growth of science, have not, in some degree, affected and even altered the standards, by which men judge of thoughts, principles, and actions, as praiseworthy or culpable—nay, in the abstract, as virtuous and vicious. So, if we are in error, it is perfectly possible and consistent that, in two different periods of the world—two different constitutions of society, the very same line of conduct in man or woman should call forth the highest admiration, and acquire deathless fame, or awaken criticism only, and be judged dubious at the least, if not disgraceful.

We might instance the recorded hardihood of Spartan mothers, inaccessible to the slightest touch of womanly or motherly feeling, a hardihood which it is still the fashion to laud in Fourth of July orations as the beau-ideal of patriotism, heroism, and a genuine love of freedom, whereas it was in truth no more than the cold and stupid insensibility of minds unrefined by civilization, unswayed by sentiment, and unsoftened by any of those redeeming graces, which, it is said, even among the most barbarous and savage hordes, are observed to relieve the primitive ruggedness of nature in the softer sex—a hardihood

which, were it now affected or put on by maiden, wife, or mother of our race, would consign her to endless scorn and loathing, as a woman deprived of the best attributes of womanhood, and differing only from the lost and lowest of her sex as inferior to them in the want of that "one touch of nature," which, in the words of the great English dramatist, "makes the whole world kin."

In like manner, we might adduce the practice—for, among the ancients, before the Christian era, it was a practice, and a time-honored practice, too, among the wisest and the best of men—of deliberate and long premeditated suicide. For in those days, not to die by his own hand, for one guiltlessly sentenced to the hand of the executioner, or fallen into the power of unrelenting enemies, was certainly regarded as an act of cowardice and dishonor; while self-murder, in a similar state of circumstances, was held an added title to the immortal honor of the sage, the patriot, or the unsuccessful hero.

At a much later period, to decline the arbitration of the sword in quarrels of a private and social nature, and, whether in the case of receiving a wrong at the hands of another, or inflicting it at his own, to deny the appeal to single combat, *was* sufficient—nay, in some countries, to this very hour, *is* sufficient—to deprive the highest member of society of all claim to social position, to stigmatize him as a poltroon, and banish him, deprived of caste for ever, from the companionship of men of honor; whereas, it is now the cry of that popular voice, which some infatuated Roman once defined as being the voice of God, that to endure obloquy, calumny, insult, nay blows, without resenting them, is the best proof of manhood, of gentlemanly bearing, and of a clear and correct sense of honor.

Without entertaining the slightest idea of entering into the discussion of any one of these vexed and disputed questions,

we have thought it well to dwell somewhat at length upon the alteration of popular sentiment on these several points, the rather that in the very person of the Heroine, whom we have selected as the subject of the present article, we have an instance directly in point—an instance of conduct on the part of a young woman, which occurring as it did, in the early part of the fifteenth century, we cannot hesitate to pronounce the offspring of genuine patriotism, of genuine heroism, and absolved, in consequence of the mode of thinking and acting in those days, from any censure of indecorum or want of those feminine attributes, to which everything else is now, and most justly, held subservient.

We are the more especially called upon to note this discrepancy, as we might otherwise ourselves fall under the charge of inconsistency, since in a preceding paper on the character of Philippa of Hainault, the admirable and womanly wife of the third Edward of England, we took occasion to express our abhorrence and loathing of those women, who in an age of gentleness, civilization, refinement, and a thorough apportionment of their appropriate rights, duties, and tasks to the two sexes, have chosen, in defiance of the laws of nature, the modesty of nature, and the wholesome prescriptions of society, and in obedience to a morbid love of excitement, or masculine lust for power or fame, to undertake the parts, unsolicited and uncalled for by anything of duty or of station, of propagandists, conspirators, patriots, and statesmen ; and have actually so far forgotten themselves as to don—not figuratively, but actually—the breeches, to become colonels of dragoons, and to fight hand to hand among the shock of martial gladiators. Of a truth, little as we can sympathize with the executioners—the scourgers, as it is alleged, of women, quite as little can we feel for the scourged ; who, according to our judgment, having made their

election, were bound to abide by the consequences; and, having adopted the duties of manhood, had no right to complain of finding that they had thereby incurred the responsibilities of manhood also.

It is to her gentleness, to her weakness, and to her alleged incapacity to contend with man, in braving the shocks of the world, the inclemency of seasons, the severity of toils, and more especially the brunt of battle, that woman is entitled to the protection, the reverence and—even when perverse and reprobate—to the pitiful clemency and considerate tolerance of man. The moment she assumes an equality of mental hardness, of physical robustness, or of active hardihood and daring, she forfeits the indulgences willingly conceded to the implied weakness of her feminine organization, and having deliberately unsexed herself, may properly and most righteously be judged as one of those among whom she has chosen to enrol herself, not as one of those whom she has deserted, in defiance of every principle of decorum, decency, or nature.

An effeminate, and effete, and unsexed man, the Hercules degraded into a willing Omphale, has at all times been regarded with scorn, abhorrence, and that disgust which is felt for reptiles beyond and below the attributes of nature. Men shrink from him with plainly discovered loathing, and true women shake the contamination of his vile presence from the very skirts of their raiment.

Why is it then? why should it be? How can it be?—for it is, alas!—it is even among ourselves, that the loud-tongued viragoes, the sword-drawing termagants, who, ashamed of their highest attributes, the delicate sensibilities, the finer organization, the more perfect perceptions, purer motives, holier aspirations, and more admirable powers of their own sex, who, in love with the brute force, the fierce ambition, the fiery excite-

ment peculiar to us, "Pagod things of sabre way, with fronts of brass and feet of clay,"—who forgetful of all modesty, propriety, decorum, nature, unsex themselves even to the putting on not the garb only, but the feelings of the gladiator, looking on death with wolfish eyes, nay! dealing death with gory hands. How can it be that these, and such as these, can meet with sympathy, nay! but with raptures of applause, triumphs of adulation, not from the men alone—though that were bad enough—but from the women—the sensitive, the delicate, the feminine, would that we could add, the true-hearted women of America?

Even in men, and with a good cause to boot, heroism of the battle-field—is it not a bloody and a beastly business? and if the state of society may not dispense with it, nor the constitution of the human heart deny its thrill of admiring sympathy to the brave man, the strength and daring of whose spirit conquers the weakness of his flesh, and in whom the love of country or of glory is greater than the fear of death—in Heaven's high name let us at least limit the license of the sword to the male hero, and doom the woman who betakes herself to so bloody work to a sentence as disgraceful as that which in the male attaches to the coward. It were a just doom, sanctioned by nature and analogy, for each is alike guilty of unfitness to rational duties, of rebellion against the veriest law of nature—and here the woman is the worst sinner, as offences of commission must needs be heavier than those of omission, and as wilfulness is at all times less the subject of pity than weakness which cannot always be controlled.

But, as I have before remarked, there have been ages of the world, in which the generally received opinions concerning duties, obligations, and the appropriate functions and fitnesses of the sexes have been so different from these which now exist,

that the historian of modern days is bound to judge of the actions and principles, the characters and conduct of the great and good, as well as of the base and bad, in accordance with the lights which they possessed and the views which they obtained, not as if they had occurred under the clearer blaze of recent knowledge, or under the better ordered standards of a wiser and more generous society. So that many deeds may have been done, nay have been done, in the troublous times of the middle ages, which we must admire, must elaborate, must hold aloft, as examples of splendid heroism ; though they would nowadays be stigmatized with propriety as indecorous, and as indicative of feelings and impulses which must be regarded as anything rather than honorable. And again, many deeds which would now be recorded with execrations on the heads of the perpetrators, as prodigies of cruelty and horror, must be narrated as lamentable instances of the ignorance and semi-barbarism of general society at that period, but by no means as examples of unusual or peculiar ferocity, or insensibility, or ignorance of the individual. Of the former class are many of the most highly lauded warlike exploits of the middle ages, many of which are tinged with a degree of hardness, ruthlessness, insensibility, and love of battle, if not of bloodshed, which would be pronounced in the nineteenth century as purely detestable. High-bred and gentle women looked upon strife and slaughter, not with dismay and loathing, but with applause and admiration, and rewarded the most bloodstained homicide with renown and love. The dearest ties of affection were broken on trivial points of honor. Insensibility to the death of children, parents, wives, nay, the sacrifice of near kinsmen to small points of chivalry, were held claims for honorable note and fame of patriotic heroism. Quarter was rarely given on the field of battle, until the victors were weary and worn out with slaying, unless for the

sake of immeasurable ransoms ; and men of the highest rank, character, and condition, were suffered to languish miserable years in closer durance than the worst felons of our days, if once they were so hapless as to fall into the hands of an enemy as prisoners of war.

Of the second class are the judicial combats, the fearful punishments inflicted on innocent persons for witchcraft, magic, devil-worship, and the like, all which absurdities were then more generally believed to be positive truths, and atrocities of hourly occurrence, by the nations at large, from the highest and best to the lowest intellects, than are the truths of Holy Writ accepted as truths by the masses of even the most Christian communities. It is much to be doubted whether down to the fourteenth century there were even ten men living in Europe, from the Danube to the Bay of Biscay, who disbelieved the actual and present agency of the Supreme Being in judicial battles, or of the Evil Being in necromancies, magical murders, false prophecies, and all the fanciful wickedness comprised under the vulgar name of witchcraft.

In reviewing, therefore, the first class, we must not be deterred by the ruggedness, the hardness, the impossibility, nor even by the fierce and sanguinary habits of the times, from attributing the praise of true heroism to many who were in their days, and according to their acceptance of the nature of heroism, true heroes, whatever might be the title which should be justly given to their deeds done nowadays.

In like manner, recording the events of the second order, we must beware of attributing individual cruelty and savageness to rulers and magistrates who ordered the infliction of penalties which make our blood run cold, for offences which we know to have no existence, but in the reality of which they implicitly believed ; for they were in reality in no wise more

censurable than the judge or jury of a modern court is for pronouncing a sentence, or finding a verdict of death, this year, for an offence, which the milder law of another year pronounces worthy only of a milder penalty.

In both these classes of events and actions, so long as the actors have acted up to the standards which their own ages considered best, highest, purest, noblest, they must be acquitted of all blame, and entitled to all honor. It is only where they have fallen below the spirit of their time in morality, or clemency, or virtue, or where they have grossly exceeded it in superstition, intolerance, bigotry, or severity, or, once more, where being themselves endued with clearer lights, purer perceptions, and higher talents, they have used and perverted the less elevated spirit of the times to their own selfish, views that they deserve our sternest denunciations.

The heroine to whom I have assigned this paper, presents a remarkable case in point, under both the views in question—under the first, as regards her character, and the light in which we are to regard her—under the second, as relates to her lamentable and unmerited end.

The first question, as regards written history, has always been decided in her favor, though it is quite certain that, according to existing ideas, a woman playing such a part to-day would receive no higher credit from the judicious or the right-minded than a Marie Ambraë, an Augustina of Saragossa, an Apollonia Jagello, or any other high-spirited *vivandière*, whom we puff in newspaper columns and praise in after dinner speeches, yet never dream of introducing to our wives, or holding up as objects of imitation to our daughters. The second question has as generally been mistreated by historians, and attributed nationally as a peculiar disgrace to England, and, individually, as an act of unusual atrocity, to the regent Bedford, though it

is perfectly evident that her fate would have been identical, if her captors had been Frenchmen, and her judges Charles or Dunois, for as the winning side really believed her mission, inspiration, and powers to be divine, the losers as readily supposed them to be fiendish: and in truth, the whole of her career is so strange, unaccountable, and marvellous, even apart from the supernatural wonders added to it by the one party, and implicitly received by both, that it would be scarce surprising if, in much milder and more recent times, and among more enlightened actors, such a course of success were considered by the vulgar minds, of which by the way there are many in every place, as the result of superhuman powers. Nay! I believe that, could such a thing have occurred, as the checking of the career of the French arms, after Lodi, Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena, the total and repeated overthrow of Napoleon, and the rolling back the reflux tide of battle from the Po and Danube to the Seine and Loire, by an Austrian or Italian peasant maiden, half the consular or imperial armies would have cried sorcery, and the other treason; and if taken, she would unquestionably have shared the fate, if not of Joan of Arc, at least of Hofer, and a hundred Spanish partisans, shot in cold blood as brigands. Nor do I think the case would have been much altered if Wellington had been driven from the conquered Pyrenees to the Tagus by a French *paysanne*, or the victor of Buena Vista into the Rio Grande by a black-browed Mexicana—at least I am sure that such events would go further to justify the belief of supernatural agency, than any part of the performance of the Misses Fox of Rochester with their assistant knockers, which are believed by many, of what some are pleased to call “the best minds in the country,” to be, not only superhuman and divine, but the best, if not sole convincing proofs of the immortality of the soul. Oh! Plato, Plato, if thy

reasonings were well, some of them have been received into most ill understandings.

But to come more directly to the personality of my heroine, it cannot, I think, be doubted, whatever hypothesis we may take of her career, that she was a very extraordinary, unusual, and in some sort superior person. That she was an impostor is incredible; and if, as I doubt not to have been the case, she was a visionary or enthusiast, and perhaps something approaching to what we call a somnambule or mesmeric personage, she must have had very rare faith in her own mission as a reality, and, what is more, very rare powers of making others also believe in its truth and divinity, to have effected what she did, with the means which she had at her command. For the minds with which, and against which, she acted, were all minds of greatly above average capacity; and yet it appears to me to be very certain that the leaders of both hosts did believe in her real possession of superhuman powers—indeed, I scarcely see how at that day and in the then state of the human mind, they could have believed otherwise—though the French would of course regard the supernaturalism as a divine, the English as a diabolical agency; for such is the natural constitution of the human mind, the partisans of any cause, which they have once fairly adopted, under whatever views, coming in the end to regard it as the true and heaven-favored cause.

But in order to get a little more nearly at this let us see what was the state of France at her appearance; what the circumstances of her success, and what the real extent of her services to her king and country.

About fourteen years before, the tremendous battle of Agincourt, won by the fifth Henry of England, had more than decimated the aristocracy, and completely subdued the feudal military power of France; all the leading princes of the blood

royal, and a fearful proportion of the nobility of the realm, had been slain on the fatal field, or still languished in English dungeons. From that day forth every species of calamity had befallen the unhappy France; the Queen-mother hostile to her own son, a minor, the dauphin Charles; the furious factions of the Armagñoes and Burgundians literally deluging the streets of Paris with French blood; province against province; prince against prince; and ever and anon the English profiting by the dissensions and disasters of the enemy to break in and overrun, and desolate and take possession, until it really did seem as though the boastful pretensions of the English king were true; and as though his utmost ambition was about to be realized, when he replied to the Cardinal des Ursias, who would have persuaded him to peace—"Do you not see that God has led me hither as by the hand? France has no sovereign; I have just pretensions to the kingdom; everything here is in the utmost confusion—no one thinks of resisting me. Can I have a more sensible proof that the Being who disposes of empires has determined to put the crown of France upon my head?"

And shortly afterward, though the battle of Baugé, wherein the Duke of Clarence fell by the spear of the Scottish champion, Allan Swinton, and Dorset, Somerset, and Huntingdon were made prisoners, threw a solitary gleam of lustre over the dark affairs of France, it availed not to retard the progress of Henry, who had, in fact, conquered all the northern provinces, and held them in quiet possession; who was master of the capital, Paris, wherein his son, afterwards Henry VI., of most hapless memory, was born amid general acclamations, and almost unanimously hailed as heir to both crowns; and who had chased the Dauphin beyond the Loire, whither he was pursued, almost in despair, by the victorious and united arms of Burgundy and England.

Had Henry's life been prolonged, it is difficult to conjecture what would have been the end, for he was no less politic as a prince, and shrewd as a man, than daring, skilful, and successful as a leader. But the Disposer of empires, whose fiat he had so recently anticipated, had already disposed of his tenure of his own, much more of his half-conquered and rashly-expected crown, and he was summoned from the captured capital of France before that throne where kings and clowns are judged equally, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the tenth of his reign—a great king, a great conqueror, a brave, honorable, and, in the main, a just and good man. Few men have performed more splendidly ambitious acts from less personally selfish motives; few kings have attained such glorious greatness through their own personal action, with less alloy of evil or detraction.

His son, whom he left not nine months old, and “whose misfortunes in the course of his life,” to quote the language of Hume, “surpassed all the glories and successes of his father,” succeeded to the crown of his father, and to his claims on that of France; nor, although minorities are proverbially weak, and the times were turbulent and stormy, did his tenure of the one, or his accession to the other, appear at first doubtful.

This appears to me to be in no degree tenable. In the first place, no person can be half-real enthusiast, half-impostor—the one or other phase of character must prevail. The impostor who knows his own jugglery, cannot believe in his own supernatural power; the enthusiast who does believe, has no need to have recourse to imposture. Secondly, so general a religious imposture, to which jurists, doctors of divinity, and ignorant, superstitious warriors must have lent themselves, is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of the age and the character of the popular mind. Thirdly, Dunois, and the other French leaders, had been

daily and hourly beaten, and had never shown either the talents or the force which they subsequently displayed. Fourthly, it is little likely that on the faith of so shallow and childish an imposture as dressing up a simple village girl, not only sane but shrewd and wise men, who had not previously ventured to undertake the most trivial sally, now boldly should set armies in the field, carry out enterprises of great pith and moment, and utterly paralyse foes so able as Suffolk, Talbot, Scales, and Falstoffs, by a series of well directed blows, stunningly delivered and rapidly followed up. Fifthly, it is incredible, that, if the French had been such fools as to try so silly a trick, if a mere trick, the English could be so miserably gulled. And lastly, the empty and useless pageant of the procession to Rheims, the whole distance through the heart of an enemy's country, and in the midst of his hostile and undismayed garrisons, cannot be accounted for by political, military, or rational grounds, or by any supposition, unless this, that every person of the French army, and of the English army also, was thoroughly convinced of her supernatural powers and irresistible prowess.

This supposition accounts for the attempt, and accounts also for its success. And such a conviction only could be wrought upon such minds as those of Charles VII. and Dunois, of Suffolk and Sir John Talbot, by a person who did really possess extraordinary talents, extraordinary enthusiasm, and did really perform extraordinary things. No one now believes that Oliver Cromwell really heard a voice, at the dead of night, telling him in his obscure boyhood that he should be "not king, but the first man in England," nor is it probable that John Hampden then believed the vision—but he did believe the enthusiasm, and did believe the fact, as he told Sir Philip Warwick, that "yon slave would be the greatest man in England." The belief

made the enthusiasm of the man—the enthusiasm of the man made the belief of the followers, and the enthusiasm and belief excited made the imagined vision to come to pass in a palpable fact.

The facts are, that she relieved Orleans, in the first giving up her own opinion to the advice of Dunois, hers being the more daring council—that she then threw herself into the city, marching, according to her own plan, directly through the English lines, the hitherto victorious Britons, before a dozen of whom hundreds of French had been daily flying in panic terror, not daring to attack her—that she stormed the lines of Suffolk, and utterly defeated his whole army with prodigious loss—that then, following up her successes, she stormed Jergean, whither the Regent had retired, carried the town by assault, Suffolk himself being obliged to surrender himself—and that a few days after, she again attacked the rear of the late victorious army with such headlong valor, that the redoubted Falstoffs fled like a poltroon before her, and was deprived of his garter for cowardice, while Talbot and Scales were made prisoners, and the whole army and cause of the English utterly disorganized and lost.

These are not the acts of an impostor, nor of men palming an enthusiast, in whom they did not believe, on inferior minds. Where did Charles and Dunois gain the audacity, the skill, and the fortune to recover all that they had lost in fourteen years, in as many days—where, indeed, if not in the conviction that Joan's enthusiasm, visionary possession, and energetic will, were indeed of heaven, and themselves consequently destined to be victorious?

The rest of her career is explained yet more easily on the same hypothesis. She next declared that her future mission was to conduct Charles in triumph, at the head of a small force, to Rheims, across one half the breadth of France, and there to

crown him with the due ceremonial of the kings of France ; and this, too, she accomplished without a banner raised, a trumpet blown, or a spear couched against her. The attempt justified the success, for the very rashness of the undertaking and inadequacy of the object increased the panic of the English. But in what possible light must we regard the statesmen and warriors whom Hume believes to have been the moving actors of this wonderful drama, if we believe them, when it was their business to have hunted the invaders from post to post, while their panic was fresh upon them, until they left the land they had so long held as their own ; if we believe them, I say, at such a time to have risked all they had won, and their army and king to boot, for the sake of a mere empty pageant, which might well have followed, but absurdly preceded the invasion of the enemy ?

This done, Joan declared her mission ended, her powers revoked, and made public her desire to resume the dress of her sex and her former condition. She was overruled, and a few days afterward taken in a sally from Compiegne, by John of Luxembourg, and transferred to the Duke of Bedford, by whom she was delivered over to the ecclesiastical power, tried by a court of bishops at Rouen, in which only one Englishman sate, and sentenced to be burned to death as a witch. Assailed on all sides by doctors and divines, by promises and threats, and naturally and consistently doubting, from her fall, the origin of her former successes, she declared her visions to be illusions and her powers impostures, and had her sentence thereupon commuted. Having, however, resumed male habits, said to have been purposely thrown in her way, and again returned to her former belief in her supernatural inspiration, probably from the idea that the male habiliments were supernaturally sent to her, she was adjudged a relapsed heretic and magician, and

she was cruelly, but in direct accordance with the notions and ideas of the age, burnt to ashes in the market-place at Rouen.

I see no cause to agree in the belief that any peculiar cruelty prompted, or that any political tactics actuated either Bedford or her judges, nor that it was any "pretence," as Hume terms it, "of heresy and magic," by which she was consigned to the flames, but as full a belief on the part of her slayers that she was a foul and fiendish wizard, as her own conviction, and that of her followers, was full and certain that she was a messenger of heaven.

Heroine and enthusiast as she was, spotless of life, dauntless of courage, hapless of death, but most fortunate of glory—certainly an agent and minister of providence, not by divine mission, but by the working of natural causes—for she redeemed the throne of France to its native owners, never again to be seriously disputed by an English claimant—few heroines have a fairer title to the name, and none a fame more spotless.

Soon after the death of Henry, his rival, Charles VI., died also. He had for many years possessed mere nominal authority in France, and his life had been as unhappy to himself as disastrous to his country. To his son he left only a disputed crown and a divided country, and that he ever owned the one unquestioned and the other entire, he owed in part to his own high qualities, and in part to the character and achievements of Joan, the maid of Arc and Orleans. He was crowned at Poitiers Charles VI.; his Paris, and Rheims—the sacred coronation city—being both in the hands of the English. This event occurred in the year 1422, and, although Henry was an infant, and when even he arrived at manhood little better than imbecile, so splendid was the administration of the protector, the Duke of Bedford, and so great the talents of the renowned generals who commanded under him, Somerset, Warwick,

Arundel, Salisbury, Suffolk, and the still greater Talbot, that they not only held Guienne, the capital, and all the northern provinces, but pressed the war with vigor in the south and west, so that the position of Charles VI. had become almost desperate, when the disastrous battle of Verneuil, second only in the slaughter of nobility to the fields of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, reduced him to the last extremity, and to such a state of hopeless poverty and depression that not only was he compelled to abandon every effort at sustaining the parade of a court, but was scarcely enabled to procure daily subsistence for himself and a few faithful followers.

Just at this moment some dissensions occurred in the English ministry, and the Duke of Bedford was recalled home, his place being ably filled by Suffolk; and, although the Duke of Brittany was beginning to look distastefully on the English alliance, and Montargis was relieved by the bastard of Orleans, better known in after days as the Count of Dunois, so little effect did the change of hands appear to have produced on the conduct of the war, that Orleans, the most important city of France in the possession of Charles, was closely invested and on the point of yielding, while the king himself was dissuaded from retreating into the remote provinces of Dauphiny and Languedoc by the entreaties of the fair but frail Agnes Sorel.

At this time an incident occurred so strange, and with consequences so extraordinary, that one can scarce wonder at the credulity of a French historian, who, describing the first appearance of Joan on the scene of history, commences thus: "But at this crisis the Lord, not desiring that France should be entirely undone, sent a woman," &c., &c., evidently esteeming her mission as positive and direct as that of St. John or any of the Holy Apostles—nor, I conceive, is it at all to be doubted that she

herself, and those to whom she revealed her visions, were as confident of her divine inspiration and superhuman power.

She was a poor girl, of the small village of Domremi, near Vaucouleurs, in Lorraine, of the very lowest class of society. She is variously stated to have been a hostler-wench at an inn, and shepherdess; but of irreproachable conduct, and undoubted virtue. It is said that she had manifested no singularity nor given any tokens of possessing superior genius, until she was seized by a sudden idea that she saw visions and heard voices commissioning her to re-establish the throne of France and expel the foreign invaders. She first made her way to the presence of Baudricourt, the governor of Vaucouleurs, to whom she declared her mission, and, although he at first treated her with neglect, she at length so far convinced him that he sent her on with an escort to the French court, at the little town of Chinon. Here, it is asserted, that she at once recognised the king, though purposely disguised and surrounded by his courtiers, and that she claimed and described, even to its minutest ornaments, and the place where it had long lain concealed, a curious antique sword, which was found in the church of St. Catharine de Fierbois. Hume, who is ever sceptical, leans to the view that all this was jugglery, not exactly on Joan's part, but on that of the French king and Dunois, who were determined to use her as an instrument; and to the talents and skill of the leaders, whose tactics he supposed were followed, Joan being merely led as a puppet through the host, he ascribes all that follows.

The Lady Catherine Douglass:

1437.

THE LADY CATHERINE DOUGLASS.

THAT was a dark and bloody age all the world over ; an age in which, for the most part, might made right, and the law of force was the only law in existence ; an age in which, if some restraint of chivalry and courteousness was still maintained—some relics of the resplendent heroism and gentle gallantry of knight-errantry still animated the bosom and actuated the conduct of the warrior nobility of England, France, and Spain—scarcely a ray of civilization enlightened the deep gloom which still brooded over the masses even of those great and powerful countries, who were in fact little elevated above the beasts their companions, and like them easily satisfied so long as they possessed a shelter against the weather, and nutriment to supply their merest wants. In the neighboring realm of Scotland, however, the gloom of barbarism was impervious ; no gentleness tempered the savage and unlettered valor of the fierce nobility, which was at this period their sole virtue ; no gentleness even towards the fair sex ; nor were these weaker and softer portions of creation exempt from the hardness, the rigor, and sometimes the cruelty of the age. The common people, whether on the Borders, or the Lothians, and the Merse, were scarcely superior to the veriest savages, either in their habits of thought or in their mode of life ; and it was among the highest of the larger

cities only that any of the comforts or refinements of life, only among the monastic orders that any tincture of the rude letters of the middle ages, could be found existing.

Distracted by the feuds which existed among all the noble families of Scotland—feuds fought out with all the deadly rancor peculiar to family dissensions, with indiscriminate slaughter of all ages, sexes, qualities—waged with the unmitigated ferocity of the times—with the storming of the castle, but without the sparing of the cottage—with the devastation of the open country, the conflagration of sparse hamlets and smaller borough towns, even in periods of the profoundest foreign peace—that the unhappy realm of Scotland presented everywhere south of the Highland line the aspect of a country visited with the extremities of fire and sword by an invading enemy; while to the northward of that dreaded demarcation, the Highland clans were wilder in their costumes, and no less terrible to their neighbors, than were the wildest Indian tribes of North America at the commencement of the present century.

Yet, in this dark and bloody time, in this distracted and almost savage country, it was the fate of a sovereign to hold sway over those ferocious barons, and over that turbulent and brutal commons, whose virtues and whose talents would have done honor to any age or nation, while his whole career speaks volumes of reproach against those in which his lot was cast.

James the First, of Scotland, the first monarch of that most unhappy of all royal houses, the house of Stuart, which, commencing miserably with his own troubled and disastrous reign, terminated no less miserably with that of his second English namesake, more than two centuries later, leaving, as its annals, little more than one continual record of civil war and domestic slaughter, of perjury, tyranny, persecution, and treason, equally on the one and the other side, of exile and assassination, of judicial

combats and judicial executions—James the First, of Scotland, was the son of Robert the Third, by Annabella Drummond, herself a distant relative of the reigning house, born in 1394 to the perilous heirship of that throne which proved so fatal to his race. His father—a weak and priest-ridden prince, constantly over-ruled, and, indeed, virtually dethroned by his ambitious brother, the Duke of Albany—dreading the worst from that false kinsman, sent his young son, then in his eleventh year, to France, where he might be brought up and educated by the allied and friendly monarch of that civilized and warlike kingdom, until he should attain the age of manhood, when he should return and claim his own, a man and a king indeed.

Fate interposed, however, and by her interposition sealed the doom of the fated line, and determined, as it would seem, by that one act, the subjugation of the Scottish realm and its ultimate union with the cognate crown of England—a union prolific of prosperity and peace alike to either country. An English squadron, cruising in the North sea, intercepted the vessel, freighted with the fortunes of a nation, and, as the respective countries were then involved in war, carried it to the Thames as lawful prize of war; whereafter the young prince and his suite were consigned, according to the custom of the day, state prisoners to the Tower of London.

Henry IV. was at that period king of England; and being engaged in the heat and fierceness of the French wars, imagined that by the detention of the young prince, who, in the following year, by the demise of his weak father, became the young king, he could deprive France of her Scottish alliance, and therefore held him in a species of free captivity, half a hostage, half a captive, but subject to no other personal restraints than those of compulsory residence within the guarded limits of one or the other of the Royal Palaces. Ungenerous treatment of a surety.

But when or where, in what period or what country, has policy been generous?—policy, whose very nature is selfishness—whose only object is to win the present greatest good for the man of the nation, irrespective altogether of the fate or sufferings of others. When we think on Napoleon, pining within the narrow limits of his ocean isle—a boundless empire and domain to the untutored, unambitious rustic—yet to his overvaulting spirit strait in dimension as the narrowest of dungeons; when we think on the noble Abd-el-Kader, gnashing his teeth, if not actually in fetters, yet pent within the circuit of stone walls; his eye accustomed to range over the illimitable desert, over the topmost peaks of his native Atlas, bleared and blinking in the glimmering twilight of his prison-house—when we think on these, the victims of modern policy, how shall we visit with too light reproach the sins, the crimes of that same policy, committed when the lights of truth, of science, of religion, burned dimly with a wavering flame over the doubtful nations!

Richard, the Lion Heart, tuning the cithern of the Troubadour in that Austrian fortalice—James Stuart composing “the King’s Aubair” in the green slopes of Windsor—John of Valois, a languid captive in the Tower, “that den of drunkards with the blood of Princes”—Joan of Arc, writhing on her pile in Rouen’s crowded market-place—Louis of Enghien, in the ditch of Vincennes, at murky morning’s dawn—Napoleon glaring over the blue Atlantic from the steep crags of St. Helena—and the wild Arab champion wasting like a chained eagle, in slow agony, far from his sandy wastes—a paradise to him—in the heart of republican, *free* France, are but so many tokens that the nature of man and policy of nations is the same as it was, as it has been, is now—will it not be the same for ever?—and that the watchword of the conqueror is still the same, *Væ victis!*

But save in this the ungenerousness of national policy and natural humanity, Henry IV. was generous to his captive, for in his guarded solitudes of Windsor the youthful James of Scotland received such an education as he could not have hoped to enjoy in the barren and unlettered battle fields of Caledonia. He grew up fair and powerful, accomplished in all manly exercises, fully up to the standard of that day's accomplishments of exercise and arms and manhood—accomplished in all gentle virtues, liberal letters, antique lore, and modern fashions, how far beyond all his contemporaneous rivals! While his youthful equal, Harry of Monmouth, one day to paralyse the heart of France by the fruitless prowess, fruitless carnage of Agincourt, was learning how to “turn and wind his fiery Pegasus,” that he might “witch the world” of his own day with “noble horsemanship,” young James of Scotland was already drinking deep at the well of English undefiled” in the shades not long before semi-deified by the rich chaunts of Chaucer, soon to be made immortal by the wild wood-notes of the Swan of Avon; had already tuned his pipe to those strains which shall survive the memory of his conquerors; had already won by the witcheries of his arts, the graceful gallantry of his demeanor, the gentle manners of his courteous youth, the heart of one who claimed the style already of a right royal English lady, one day, alas! to bear the thorny crown and troublous title of a right royal Scottish Queen—beautiful, high-born Joanna Beaufort, whom he first saw, first loved, a captive, from his prison casements in the round tower of Windsor, while she was wandering, fancy-free, amid the verdant slopes and royal gardens towards the Little Park and the smooth meads of Datchet—places which live, gardens which glow, and meads which bloom to this day, happy memorials of the happier past, lusty mementoes of the time when English life was lusty, when men

wore manhood with their beards, and women sought no rights beyond the rights of womanhood; of conquering by their very inability to conquer, and governing by virtue of submission. And yet the women of that time, unprescient as they were in that old day of "what fantastic tricks" their sex should some time "play before high heaven, most ignorant of what they're most assured, their glossy essence, making the angels weep," and all undreaming of the *rights* which they should one day claim through their unborn posterity in a yet undiscovered hemisphere, had, notwithstanding, a more clear insight into the nature of their duties, and a more infinite capacity to do and dare, and, if need were, to die, at duty's bidding, than ever had the strongest-minded female of this nineteenth century who pants to don the masculine attire and to achieve manly laurels in the field, the forum, and the senate, seeing not that they overstep the modesty of nature.

Hear therefore all, especially ye who burn in the advocacy of the rights, hear a tale of the olden time, and a true tale, of the duties—or what a Scottish maiden took to be such—of a true woman.

It may seem a strange tale, it may seem a mistaken duty to those who, reared in very different days, in a far distant clime, and under circumstances most diverse—to those I say, who far from believing loyalty to be a duty or a virtue, can scarcely be induced to regard it as a principle, or as a fact at all; or induced to consider it as other than the slavish truckling of a base spirit, or the fanatical veneration of a superstitious spirit, to something casually set above it; to such I say, it may seem a strange tale and a mistaken duty; but I, for one, believe that, in her line and season, the Lady Catherine Douglass did her duty, as she understood it, and as it was; and did it well—and that where she has gone, and where sooner or later we all must

follow her, she hath her exceeding great reward before HIM, who if he has said that he hath no regard for princes more than for other men, has surely never said that he hath regard for other men more than for princes; but bade with his own immortal voice, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."

Years had flown—as they will fly, joyous or unhappy, swift or slow—on ignoble and noiseless wings, with their unvarying, unalterable flight, and the boy captive had waked into the captive man, the princely bud had bloomed into the royal flower. Henry the Fourth, usurping Bolingbroke, had departed, murmuring with his last sigh, as he saw in the clearsightedness of coming death, his son untimely grasping at the royal circlet, which he, himself, had grasped untimely, and now first felt to be no blessing but a burden—

"Then happy low lie down,
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Henry the Fifth, the merry mad Prince Hal, the Victor of Agincourt, had departed, and even in departing had discovered that

"There is no armor against fate;
Death lays his icy hands on kings;
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade."

The Earl of Bedford, the wise regent, had succeeded to the sway of England, and so much of France as yet remained submissive to the English sword and sceptre.

The captive prince was now, through Bedford's wiser, nobler policy, the wise, accomplished, and good king of the unruly,

turbulent, and traitorous Scottish barons, of the tumultuous, unlettered, savage Scottish people. The imprisoned bard of Windsor was now the avenging judge of past crimes and past abuses, the reforming monarch of an unreformed aristocracy, the prince at peace with all foreign powers, but at the worst of wars with the most perilous of all foes, his own jealous people.

His fate was, of course, that of all first reformers, to be abandoned and misunderstood by those whom the reform should have profited even to the raising them from brute nature to humanity—to be overmastered and destroyed by the opponents of all reform.

Deserted by his parliament, at terms of defiance with his bad barons, misconceived by his rude people, never, perhaps, had the captive's chain been so galling to his soul as was now the king's crown—and often when served with bended knees, and circled by uncovered heads, each of which, as he well knew plotted daggers; bearing the style and title, but not the liberty or power of a king—aye, often did he sigh for the tuneful days of his peaceful prison-house, when his whole pride was confined to his own heart, his whole kingdom comprised in the allegiance of one other heart—now as then, fond, loyal, and his own—the heart of bright and beautiful Joanna Beaufort.

For eighteen years he struggled wearily, yet well, against the discontents and disorders which met him on every hand, having no solace from his cares save in the society of his fair, accomplished wife, and the ladies of her court, whom she had selected not merely for their beauty or their birth, but for their taste, their literary or musical talents: and of whom she had formed a circle which, while it excited the rude scorn and boisterous mockery of the prince barons of the Marches, was to her unfortunate lord the only brighter phase of his existence.

That eighteenth year was marked by one event which seemed

for a moment to give promise of brighter fortunes in the future, but like the most of the smiles of fortune, this also proved delusive, and in the end disastrous. He had renewed the ancient and time-honored alliance between France and his native land, giving his daughter Margaret in marriage to the youthful heir of the French throne, the then dauphin, afterwards Louis the Eleventh, of evil memory, long before whose majority she had the good fortune to pass into the peace of the quiet grave. With splendid pomp, and a gorgeous train of northern knights and nobles, accompanied moreover by a powerful body of life-guards, who, in after days, formed the nucleus of the famous mercenary bands of Louis—known as the Scottish archers, long after the bow had become obsolete and given place to the musket—the child-wife and infant princess set sail from the dark and misty shores of Caledonia for the sunny plains of “la belle France,” which she reached uninterrupted, although the English fleet put to sea to intercept her; encouraged by their success in her father’s case, to adopt the same procedure in her own. They failed as far as the daughter was concerned; but indirectly their attempt proved the destruction of the hapless king and father, whose life had been embittered from its very outset by the intolerance and bitterness of their national hatred.

Exasperated by the cruel and ungenerous attempt, James set a force on foot, and, declaring war on England, moved southwards to invade the northern provinces of Cumberland, Northumberland, and Durham, which were then to the ever-warring borderers of the two Island kingdoms, what Flanders has been in all modern ages to the rest of Europe, the common battlefield, and as it were, the lists open at all times to all comers with the trumpet note and challenge-call to combat *à l’outrance*. But such was the ill-will of his nobles, curbed in their violence, limited in their covetous ambition, and straitened in their reve-

nues by the confiscation of their wrongfully alienated crown-lands, that James speedily discovered that his ill-regulated army was like to prove more dangerous to himself than to his enemies; and learning the formation of conspiracies against his person, disbanded it at once, and suddenly retired to Perth, in which his royal father had for the most part resided, and where he had himself founded a Carthusian Monastery—the abbot and brothers of which were his firm, and perhaps his only adherents.

It was a dark and gusty evening of February, when the Court was assembled in an upper chamber—one of a long connected suite of apartments in the Carthusian Monastery, to which the unfortunate monarch had retreated in the hope—fruitless hope, as it proved to be—of being permitted to pass the remainder of his blameless days in the pursuit of literary ease and the gratification of his gentle social tastes, and, for that age, almost unnatural accomplishments. There can, perhaps, be no greater misfortune for any man than to be born either far behind or far in advance of his age; to be the former, is to be scoffed at as an old-time dotard, a mere *laudator temporis acti*—to be the latter, is to be persecuted, perhaps martyred, for opinion's sake, as a heretic to admitted holy doctrines, or a vile innovator on time-hallowed usages; and if so to a private individual, how much more so to a monarch, untimely set to govern a people yet unripe for change, and bigoted against reform.

Such was the case with the first of the Stuarts. Had he been in his own day the king of France or England, he would have still been a century in advance of the spirit of his kingdom. Had he been, two centuries later in his own land, born to the throne so fatally filled by the last Scottish sovereign of his race, incomparable, guilty, hapless Mary, he would have still found himself as unable to control the Ruthvens and the Lyndesays,

the Murrays and the Mortons, who drove *her* an exile to the false hospitality of her southron sister-queen, as he was to compel the respect and force the submission of his own Atholes and Grahams.

The barons of his own fierce land required to be ruled by a man as brave and fierce as themselves, who should govern them with a sword for a sceptre ; and in James Stuart they had one whom they regarded as a sort of foreign *jongleur* ; and this weak, frivolous, vain, outlandish thing, neither all woman nor half man, attempting to enforce over them, who owned no superior but the wearer of a sharper sword, that supremacy which they the most despised and loathed—the supremacy of the law.

Therefore between him and them, as between the antagonistic principles of diverse and conflicting ages, it was war for existence—war *à l'outrance*.

The chamber in which, on that wild gusty night, James sat with his queen and her ladies in easy and familiar state,—which, indeed, scarcely could be called state,—was a large, low-ceiled, vaulted hall, with huge round arched and mullioned casements. Through these the merry glare of the great wood-fire, as it went soaring up the chimney in sheets of ruddy flame and volumes of illuminated smoke, mixed with the lustre of fifty waxen sconces with broad silver reflectors, shone out far into the murky night, beaconing to all the city that there the king held court. The other decorations of that stately room were as superior to the modes of the time, as were the personal habits of its royal resident to those of his contemporaneous kings. Instead of rushes, the floor was covered with rich tapestries, the walls were draped with embossed and gilded Moorish leather from Cordova, and, instead of arms and weapons, implements of the chase, and trophies of the battle, were adorned with works

of art, such as art then was—ere its revival from the darkness of the Middle Ages ; with musical instruments, some of the king's own construction—for in addition to his unquestioned merit as a poet, he was a musician and composer of no mean order ; and with a few shelves of rare illuminated manuscripts. One table strewn with missals, music, rude sketches, and a few objects of what we should now call *vertu*, such as lacrymatories, bronze and golden ornaments, antique arms, and funeral vases extracted from the graves without the Roman native camps, or the yet more ancient Pictish barrows ; and another spread with the delicacies of what was then termed a *rare supper*—for the proper supper, which was the principal meal of the day, had taken place some hours ago—with a due complement of the cumbrous-looking, but picturesque settees and high-backed arm-chairs, composed the furniture of this most unroyal royal chamber—unroyal, for in it there was neither dais nor canopy ; neither footstool nor chair of state ; neither the treasured *fleurs-de-lis*, and unicorn of Scotland, nor any of the insignia of Caledonian royalty ; and in it there stood neither lords in waiting, nor gentlemen of the household ; neither pensioners nor ushers of the rod ; but only in attendance, by the board, two unarmed pages, in the black and scarlet liveries of the realm, ready to hand wine or refreshments to the company.

And that company—the king himself clad merely as a gentleman of birth in plain black velvet ; a gentleman of noble stature and fine features—the latter marked with something of that melancholy which was the characteristic of all his race, and especially of his equally unhappy descendant, the first Charles of England, in whom it was believed—long before the first shadow gloomed on his political horizon—to be a prognostic of violent and early death ; the queen, stately, and finely formed, and fair, with the rich complexion and luxuriant sunny

hair of England, and the high, aquiline features, still lineal in the princely family of the house of Beaufort ; and, lastly, her four maids of honor—damsels whose very names denoted that they were of the highest blood of Scotland ; and of the blood, from first to last, true and devoted to the Stuart—for there was a Seyton and a Beatoun, a Carmichael and a Douglass—but of these four, though all were young, graceful, and gentle, and fair enough each one to be the cynosure, we have to do only with the last ; for she, the Lady Catherine Douglass, differed from all the rest, not only in the style and character of her beauty, but in her demeanor ; and, indeed, her whole aspect on that eventful evening was unusual at least, if not unbecoming in such a presence.

She was very tall, very largely formed, and though delicate and even slender, so fully rounded in her figure as to give the idea of her having attained years far more mature than she indeed had, for she was scarcely yet seventeen. Her profuse hair, closely banded over her tresses, and falling in luxuriant masses over her neck and shoulders, was black as night, as were her heavy, straight brows, which imparted a character of unusual sternness to features naturally grave and almost austere. She sate apart from the rest in an embrasure of one of those high windows, gazing steadfastly towards the town, and evidently all untouched by the fine music and fine poetry which were enriching all the atmosphere around her, although the music and the words were both the composition of a king—of a king beloved and present. So still she sate that the others had entirely forgotten her presence, the rather that she was concealed from their view by a stout clustered pillar casting a massive shadow over the embrasure within which she had taken post. But though she heeded not the company, nor was heeded by them, it was evident that she was anything but pensive or

abstracted, for her face wore that air of strange excitement which Scottish superstition believes to be the consequence of a preternatural foresight, and which is commonly known to that people as a *raised look*. Her lips are half apart; her eyes fixed on vacancy; her ear turned in the peculiar attitude of listening. One hand was pressed upon her heart as if it would repress its beating; the other, as it hung down by her side, was clinched as tightly as though it was closed upon the hilt of a dagger.

Men said that Catherine Douglass loved her king with a love that surpassed a subject's love of loyalty—even as a later Douglass of the ruder sex loved the loveliest of all the Stuarts—unhappy Mary. Had the strong blood of Douglass been mated with the weak stream that ran in the veins of the Stuarts, it might, perhaps, in either case, have saved its sovereign. As it was, in both cases, the weak in falling dragged the stronger down.

But now the time was close at hand—the hour had come, and the men. And still the gay song went on, and the rich music poured its stream unheard—unheard by those inspired ears of Catherine, which, deaf to their merry minstrelsy, were filled with sounds they could not hear, as were her eyes alive to sights they could not see.

Without, the city had already sunk to sleep, and no sounds had been heard over the streets and wynds late so populous and noisy for above two hours, except the sad, soft sigh of the westland wind, as it came wailing down from the Highland hills; and the dull, monotonous rush of the flooded Tay, as it poured along beneath the city walls, swollen with the melting snows, for it had thawed for several days, and the river was bankful; and from hour to hour the clang of the convent bell telling how the night rolled away.

No guard was set at the convent gate ; only within the porch beside a close-barred picket, under a blinking lanthorn, dozed, muffled in his cowl, an old Carthusian.

Hard by, but close concealed within the mouths of several narrow and filthy wynds or lanes, debouching into the High street of Perth, between rows of houses so disproportionately tall as to cause their openings to resemble the cavernous gorges between precipitous cliffs, rather than human thoroughfares between human dwellings, about forty or fifty powerfully built men had been standing on the watch motionless for above two hours, closely wrapped in heavy serge cloaks, fitted with capes projecting far over their faces, which they completely concealed from view. At length the echoes of the convent bell died into silence, after the twelve stern notes that tell of midnight, and as they died away, a faint and guarded footstep, accompanied by a muffled clash of metal, was heard approaching.

"It is he at length !" whispered one of the watchers, uttering a single low whistle, which was answered at once by two similar notes, and followed by the approach of a person similarly clad, but of more dignified port and taller stature than the others.

"The time has come," he said. "The lights are all out ! They have retired this half hour. Silence, and follow !"

And as they went in single file, their feet gave scarce a sound on the rugged pavement, so thickly were they clothed in felt, gliding along through the dim streets like fleeting ghosts, in total silence, unless when that strange muffled clash was heard, ominous of evil.

They reached the convent gate, and the leader, knocking very gently, and whispering a countersign, it opened seemingly automatus, for, when they entered, the sleeping Carthusian was no longer there, and the blinking lanthorn only kept the

wicket. They entered one by one, and filed off silently one by one into the cloistered court, the leader carrying the dull lantern with him, and the ten who entered last, remaining within the porch to guard against interruption from without.

The others, as they reached the grass-plat in the centre of the cloister, threw off their muffings, and stood revealed, a band of grim and grisly warriors, with scar-seared faces, and many with grey hair, and all with indubitable marks of high birth and station in the insolent daring of their aspect, and the fierce haughtiness of their bearing. All were armed *cap-a-pie* in steel, but they had no crests on their basnets, no blazonings on their steel coats, and they bore no weapons save—each in his right hand—a long broad dagger, known as the *misericorde*, unsheathed and ready for assassination. The tall, gaunt man who led them still wore his vizor up, and the dark grizzled face and snow-white hair revealed the uncle of the king—Walter, the Earl of Athole. Lowering his *aventaille*, with a mute gesture, he led onward, and all followed silently, for they still wore their felt shoes over their mail hose, though little need there seemed for such precaution.

No human being met them in the cloisters, nor in the vaulted corridors, nor on the vast stone staircase—no human eye looked down on them from the tall casements—no owl screeched at the murderers, “not a mouse budged” for all their dull resounding footsteps.

But within one faithful heart presaged their coming.

Within her embrasure, still as a marble statue, with lips apart, clinched hand, and glaring, sate Catherine Douglass.

When the royal company arose for the night, she had not arisen, and, none observing her where she sate withdrawn, all fancied that she had retired before them, and was a-bed already.

The dying brands glimmered feebly through the great hall—the waxen lights were dead in the sconces, and the pale watcher scarcely seemed less dead than they.

Hark ! hark ! one by one—one by one—stealthy, ghostlike, only not silent—on they came, up the stairs, through the corridor, those muffled footsteps. They paused.

A loud, clear voice woke the night.

“The king ! The king ! To arms ! to arms ! within there, Brandanes, look to your bills and bows ! The traitors are without ! The doors are barred ! Treason ! fie, treason !”

It was the voice of Catherine Douglass—and at her cry there was a rush from within, but it was not the steelclad rush of the trusty Brandanes, the faithful body-guard, the men of Bute and Islay—only the rush of unshod girlish feet, the rustle of female garbs, and the firm stride of one manly foot—the foot of a king come forth unarmed to die.

At the same instant came a hoarse whisper from without, while a heavy hand pressed the door inward, as if expecting to find no resistance. “Away ! silly minion ! There be no Brandanes, nor no bars wherewithal to bar the gate !”

“Traitor, thou liest !” was the firm reply. “For I have thrust mine arm into the staples, and when was not the blood and bone of a Douglass stronger than bars of wood or bolts of iron ? Fly, my liege, fly—by the back stairway, and the postern—McLouis and the Brandanes keep the river gate ! away ! I will hold them !”

“Curses upon thee ! Yield, minion ! force it, Graham ; break in, Ruthven ! Curses on her ! curses ! What if she be a woman, or what avails a paltry wench’s bones, when a king’s blood and a kingdom are at stake !”

There was the energetic rush of ten heavy shoulders of strong men against the oaken door without—within there was the

steady and undaunted nerve of one pale girl in agony—and for an instant's space the girl's nerve carried.

Then came a fearful, crouching, shivering crash—low but distinct, and then the tearing of the white flesh and sinews, drowned in the splintering din of wood, and the fierce tramp of the armed assassins as they rushed in resistless.

No scream passed her pale lips in that extremity of torture—her dying eyes swam towards her king, to see if her devotion had availed to save him. But there he stood, horror-stricken, trammelled by the clinging arms of his shrieking queen and her maidens. Had he been free he would have dragged her from that fatal, fruitless post; had he been armed he had avenged her.

As it was, he died with her; manfully, as becomes a man, in silence—royally, as becomes a king who cannot resist effectually, unresistingly.

Fearfully in after days did the assassins rue their crime in unheard-of tortures. But what tortures could expiate the blood of that devoted girl, what price repay her glorious self-abandonment, save that which we will not doubt she has received—

The Crown of Martyrdom in Heaven!

Margaret of Anjou ;

WIFE OF HENRY VI.

1457.



MARGARET OF ANJOU,

WIFE OF HENRY VI.

THERE is a very general habit among ordinary, and what may be called everyday readers—even among that portion of them who would feel themselves greatly aggrieved at being supposed to underlie such a charge—of forming their general estimate of events, persons, characters, and circumstances even of veracious history, from the fictitious delineations of them found in the pages of poets, dramatists, and romancers; much pleasanter reading certainly, if less to be relied on, than old musty black-letter chroniclers, or modern pragmatical compilers. Not a few even of our historians—themselves the teachers, as they should be, of less solid and solemn falsehoods—have too often, as it seems to me, condescended to become their pupils; and have transmitted tales, intended for the brief amusement of an audience wishing to be pleased for an hour, as grave facts and authorities for the information of an audience desirous to be instructed throughout ages.

Of no portion of history is this more true, than of that dark and gloomy period known as the Wars of the Roses, which devastated England for above thirty years, during which twelve*

* Hume II. 433. Phillips & Sampson's edition.

pitched battles were fought, besides skirmishes innumerable; in which the lives of above eighty princes of the blood-royal were lost either in the field or on the scaffold; the ancient nobility of England almost annihilated; the ancient spirit of chivalry, with its redeeming charities, and courtesies, and mercies, and above all its high sense of honor, utterly eradicated; and a fierce, brutal, bloodthirsty, and scourgeful party furor—not palliated even by a loyal adherence to party, and utterly regardless of the sanctity of oaths, or hospitalities, or ties of blood—was for a long and hideous lapse of years ill-substituted. Of this black page—the blackest, I think, take it all for all, of the history of England—there is but one point on which the Anglo-Saxon reader can dwell with any satisfaction; it is the admitted truth, that, whereas in the civil wars of the European continent, it is the masses, the peaceful citizens and the hard-handed peasantry, who have ever suffered, the yet bloodier civil Wars of the Roses were literally war to the castle, peace to the cottage.

While eighty princes of the blood-royal perished, many slaughtered in cold blood by noble, nay, but by kindred hands, many more arbitrarily doomed to the scaffold; while the old feudal aristocracy were so hewn down, root and branch, that an eloquent writer* has asserted—a little extravagantly, perhaps, but still with some base whereon to stand—that “after the battle of Bosworth, a pure Norman-descended Baron was a rarer thing in England than a wolf,” few citizens or peasants fell, unless in the *chaude mêlée* to which they followed their favorites or their lords; no military executions swept away the captives by thousands, after the more merciful shock of arms was past; no warrant of high treason followed the peasant to

* Benjamin d’Israeli’s “Coningsby.”

his cottage, or the artizan to his booth. The "after carnage" fell on the nobles only.

"Society, therefore," to quote the words of the most recent, as he is assuredly the most eloquent, of English historians,* "recovered from the shock as soon as the actual conflict was over. The calamities of civil war were confined to the slaughter on the field of battle, and to a few subsequent executions and confiscations. In a week the peasant was driving his team, and the esquire flying his hawks over the field of Towton or of Bosworth, as if no extraordinary event had interrupted the regular course of human life."

"Even while the Wars of the Roses were raging," he resumes, a few paragraphs later—"our country appears to have been in a happier condition than the neighboring realms during years of most profound peace. Comine* was one of the most enlightened statesmen of his time. He had seen all the richest and most civilized parts of the continent. He had lived in the opulent towns of Flanders, the Manchesters and Liverpools of the fifteenth century. He had visited Florence, recently adorned by the magnificence of Lorenzo; and Venice, not yet humbled by the confederates of Cambray. This eminent man deliberately pronounced England to be the best governed country of which he had any knowledge. Her constitution he emphatically designated as a just and holy thing, which, while it protected the people, really strengthened the hands of the king who respected it. In no other country, he said, were men so effectually secured from wrong. The calamities produced by our intestine wars seemed to him to be confined to the nobles and the fighting men, and to bear no such traces as he had been

* Macaulay, vol. i., p. 27.

† Philip de Comine, minister of Charles the Bold, of Burgundy—the great historian of the age of Louis XI.

wont to see elsewhere, of ruined dwellings and depopulated cities."

Yet, of this singular and almost anomalous period, the admiration of contemporaneous statesmen, the wonder of succeeding philosophers, it is not too much to say that ninety-nine hundredths of all English readers form their opinions in accordance to the rules in which it has pleased the genius, or perhaps—alas! that it should be said of the greatest as well as the basest of men—the interest of Will Shakspeare to paint them.

In his great historical plays, by which he led captive the fancies of the great of his own day, and has led astray the judgments even of wise men ever since, Richard the Second, the parts of Henry the Fourth, Henry the Fifth, the parts of Henry the Sixth, and Richard the Third, lie almost all the opinions of almost all readers of the present day concerning the rights and wrongs, the virtues and vices, the sins and sorrows of the personages of that distracted period. So true is this, that I well remember being myself asked by a lady of very superior talents and various reading, "How it was to be explained that some historian, whom she mentioned, and I have forgotten, could describe Richard the Third as a wise, able, and politic king, when it was well known that he was not king more than a few days?" She had, of course, formed her idea of the time from Shakspeare's play, or rather from Colley Cibber's version of it—for Will himself does not quite so much hurry the action—in which Richard is Duke of Gloucester in the first act, King in the second, and slain by the young and gallant Harry of Richmond in the fifth act; the latter personage, by the way, whom it suited the poet to magnify, being one of the coldest-blooded, meanest, and most cruel tyrants—one of the most arbitrary and deliberate enemies of the English constitution, and one of the most odious men, both in public

and private life, that ever disgraced a throne. The bloated and bloodthirsty monster, the wife-murderer, who succeeded him, was less detestable than he, for *his* vices were those of a bad man—the other's those of a villanous machine; the crimes of the second tyrant were the effects of hot-blood and boiling passion, while those of his father were the offspring of cold malice and deliberate calculation.

In no case, it is clear from the very nature of his vocation, can the dramatist or the romancer be a safe exponent, or be received as a true authority of historic questions. Effect is his object, not truth—contrast the points at which he aims, not congruities. If he find contrasts and effects, it is the privilege of his caste, perhaps it is his duty as a craftsman, to strengthen the latter by exaggerating the former. If the true tale of the courts which he has chosen whereon to build the lofty rhyme, as otherwise well adapted to his purpose, lack these effects and contrast, why then, at the expense of historical truth, he must create them—and why not? He offers to amuse you as a poet, never probably dreaming that you are so mad as to quote him into an historical authority. His object is to stir your feelings to the pitch of action, to make you burn with anger, melt with tears, tremble with visionary terrors; he cares not whether his portrait is to the life or no, so that your sympathies declare it to be life-like; it matters not to him whether his censure blacken the ermine's purity or his praise purify the murderer's crimson; and wherefore should it? or "what is Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba," that he should lose your approbation for her honor?

This is good cause why any avowed writer of entertaining fiction should be regarded as an insecure base whereon to found an opinion of true character. Historians, whose privilege exempts them not from the closest adherence to the literal fact,

misled by personal partiality and factious partisanship, err oft enough, heaven knows, in this particular, and become guides so blind, that we have no occasion to seek for pilots through the Cimmerian darkness of darkest historic regions among those, who as being human are equally liable to go astray through faction or favor, and who have never bound themselves to accuracy or adherence to the letter of the truth. But why the authority of the great, the immortal poet of England, who most of all his tuneful brethren was Saxon English to the core, is to be viewed with suspicion and distrust as concerns facts of history, during the Wars of the Roses more especially, is that all his personal prejudices leaned to the Lancastrian side; that all his principal patrons, most of all the man-minded Elizabeth, was a genuine Tudor, and though in the female line descended from the house of York, held and claimed her crown always as the heiress of her grandfather—Henry VII., of Lancaster.

By vastly the greater proportion of all English readers, who have not troubled themselves to look into dry genealogical details, and who perchance regard heraldry as a mere jargon, it is supposed to this day, through the enormous influence of Shakspeare's wondrous dramas—of which influence the prevalence of this error is not perhaps the least evident proof—that the house of Lancaster was in the true line of the Royal succession, and that the house of York were daring and intrusive usurpers.

I do not intend to charge the great poet with intentionally originating this falsehood; for it is more than probable that historians and chroniclers—such as they were at that day—began, so soon as Henry VII. had secured the crown upon his head, and Henry VIII. all but added to it the Papal tiara, to conciliate the favor of the arbitrary and grasping Tudors, by strengthening the claims of the usurping house of Lancaster and depreciating those of the rightful heir of York.

How easy a thing it is to falsify history by personal favor and factious partisanship; and how difficult a thing it is, when it has once been falsified, to unravel the tangled yarns of truth and falsehood, how almost hopeless to arrive at the right, we need not go far to discover—not farther than to the history of these United States, and that of the last half century, within the personal memory of many men now living—for it is yet a mooted question, and probably never now can be satisfactorily answered, whether or no a general of high command was a traitor, a commodore in a celebrated naval victory a coward; and if it be so easy a thing for partisan pens to cloud the truth of actions so recent, as to make it undiscoverable—how arduous must it not be to follow the clue of history through the devious winding of ignorance, of sophistry, of prejudice, of intentional falsehood to the right end, when that end is centuries distant!

In this case, happily, the truth lies in a nutshell, and depends on facts of genealogical descent, so plain and potent, that we need not dive deep into the mysteries of heraldic science to develop it.

Richard II., who succeeded to the throne of England in 1377, was the only son and heir of Edward the Black Prince, the eldest son of Edward III.; he survived his father, and ascended the throne at the decease of his grandfather, being then only eleven years of age; and though in his early youth, while yet a minor, he displayed both energy and courage, as he advanced in years, he proved himself the weakest, most imbecile, and favoriteled of English princes, with scarcely the exceptions of his hapless great-grandfather, Edward II., and yet more hapless successor, the sixth Henry, with whose reign we have to do.

It is very usual to hear much pity wasted upon weak princes, and it is a favorite subject of declamation with historians, to lament over the private virtues of the victim of his own imbe-

cility, and to wonder at nations rebelling against good-natured idiots, which had remained tranquilly loyal under the rule of capable despots. The truth is, that, for the most part, nations suffer more under weak princes—themselves subservient to a host of insolent, voracious, and ambitious favorites, each and all of whom oppress the masses—than under one despot who oppresses them himself, but who allows none to oppress them but himself—on the principle that one bad master is better than a thousand ; and so it was proved with Richard. For, during his incapable and unfortunate reign, he so completely lost all hold on any party that, when he disappeared, no one cared to inquire whether it was by actual violence, or by the natural termination of imprisoned misery. The Duke of Lancaster, better known to the general reader as Harry of Bolingbroke, usurped the throne, with the consent, indeed, of Parliament, and amid the rejoicings of all parties ; and the unhappy Richard was committed to close custody in Pomfret Castle, where he soon died, not without suspicion of being murdered by Sir Piers Exton, who had him in charge. This Harry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, was son to the last Duke of Lancaster, third brother of Edward III., by Catherine Swineford, the daughter of a private knight of Hainault. He assumed the crown, in 1399, under the title of Henry IV., and held it successfully and firmly, though with the strong hand always—a manifest and double usurper ; since, even supposing the forced resignation of Richard to be valid, the true title to the throne, vacant by his demise, was in the house of Mortimer, represented by the Earl of March, son of the daughter of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III., and Edward Mortimer, the Earl, preceding him. *This is the point on which the whole case turns*, as in this the primogeniture of the house of Lancaster breaks down, and ultimately, as I shall presently show, the true title was vested in the house of York.

Although this may seem a little dry and tedious, I will promise that it shall be brief, and I would beg even the most impatient of my readers to bear with me yet a little further, as a few more words will put them *au fait* to the solution of a very knotty question, at which to get, through the regular channels of legitimate history, they would have to wade through many a weary chapter, and then among the multiplicity of Philippas, Isabellas, and Margarets—they had very pretty names it must be admitted—and of ever recurring Dukes of Clarence, York, Lancaster, and Gloucester, reign after reign; and generation after generation, will, ten to one, overlook the gist of the question when they come at it.

This usurping Henry IV., as I have said, held his crown so long as he lived, and transmitted his title, disputed during his life, to be yet more fiercely disputed after his death, to his son, Henry V., one of the brightest supporters of the English crown, dying a natural death in 1413, as unpopular at his demise as he had been popular at his accession. In that year Henry V. succeeded, and though disputes were raised in behalf of the Earl of March, by an admixture of mercy tempering the severity of law, he suppressed all conspiracies, spread the glories of English arms far beyond the seas, and died the last great foreign conqueror, and perhaps the most popular of English kings, in 1422.

To him succeeded, at the age of nine months, his only son, by Catherine of France, under the title of Henry VI., and, with his crown, inherited the false and disputed title, without the strong heart or the strong hand which can out of might make right.

During his long minority, and the protectorate of the able and upright Dukes of Bedford and Gloucester, his uncles, no claims were laid to his crown. Yet even his minority was unfortunate; for the loss of all the French provinces, one by one

—nearly all of which, including the capital, were held by the English at his accession heated the mind of the public against him, and tended in some degree to his subsequent disasters. A short time before he attained to his majority, the great and good Duke of Bedford died at Rouen; and the unfortunate dissensions which existed between the Cardinal Winchester and the Duke of Gloucester excluded that honorable prince from the councils of the young king, who, as he arrived at years of manhood, showed an imbecility of character, a want of parts, a silly, weak good-nature, and a willingness to be guided, not inferior to that which had discrowned Richard II., and set his own house on the throne, though his character was not disgraced by the love of low society and vulgar debauchery, which belonged to that most unprincely of princes.

On the death of the Duke of Bedford, a man, with whom, henceforth, we shall have much to do, was appointed Regent of France in his stead—Richard, Duke of York, namely—destined thereafter to be his rival for the crown. This Richard was son of the Earl of Cambridge, who was second son of the old Duke of York, fourth son of Edward III. His mother was sister to the last Earl of March, who died without issue during the late reign, and therefore great grand-daughter of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, *second* son of Edward III. The death of the Earl of Cambridge's elder brother without issue, left Richard Duke of York. He was therefore, on his father's side, heir to the *fourth*, and on his mother's, to the *second* son of Edward the Third. The house of the eldest son, the Black Prince, was extinct with Richard II., and that of the *third*, the usurping house of Lancaster, held the throne to the prejudice of the true heirs.

This Duke of York, however, though a man of parts, character, integrity, and courage, was mild, kind-tempered, and cautious; and it is little likely that he would ever have disturbed

the succession by any claims, had he not been unwisely forced from inaction into arms.

Shortly after Henry's accession, his ministers—or governors, as they might be called more justly—the Dukes of Somerset, Suffolk, and Buckingham, negotiated his marriage with MARGARET OF ANJOU, the daughter of René, King of Provence, and titular king of Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem, and Count of Anjou, of all which splendid titles he possessed the barren honor only, with scarce the land or revenue of an English baron. The lady herself, however, was the loveliest of her day, and, both in mind and body, the most accomplished in all Christendom. She had a high, courageous spirit, an enterprising temper, a solid understanding, and vivacious talents. In all respects, she was one of whom, says Hume, who does not on the whole write favorably of her—"it was reasonable to expect that, when she should mount the throne, these"—her great talents—"would break out with still superior lustre." In all respects, she was one fitted to be the wife of a husband lacking the energies alike and the capacities of a man, without the wit to conciliate and the will to control his people. In circumstances, as in character, she was not unlike the unhappy wife of the sixteenth Louis of France, although she lacked her more feminine virtues and her gentler graces. In devotion to a drivelling, dotard husband; in maternal affection, maternal courage, she was surpassed by no one. Both foreigners in the countries they were destined to rule, both hated by their people for being foreigners, both linked unequally to drivelling dastards, both strove, according to their natures and the ages in which they lived, for the rights of their lords, and the inheritance of their children. It were no mean praise to say of Margaret of Anjou, as I should not hesitate to say, and as I hope to establish, that she was a

runder Marie Antoinette of a ruder age, though not of a more sanguinary epoch or a more cruel country.

It happened, unfortunately for Margaret, that by the treaties of her marriage, negotiated, as I have said, by the Dukes of Suffolk and Somerset, the remote province of Maine, lately conquered by the English arms from the French crown, had been ceded to her uncle Charles of Anjou, though she brought herself no dowry to the king, her husband. Still more unhappily it fell out that in carrying out this cession a fresh strife arose ; a war broke out between the two countries, in the course of which all the French provinces, having been attached to the English crown since the reign of Henry II., were lost to England for ever, and attached to the French crown. There can be no doubt that the loss of these provinces was a real gain to England ; but at that day politics was a science not sufficiently advanced to permit even the wisest statesman to discern this truth, and the popular pride in England was attached, in those days, to the maintenance of the French conquests, just as it is nowadays to that of Malta and Gibraltar ; and as the popular fury would fall hot and heavy on the administration which should surrender or lose those costly fortalices of the national vanity, so fell it then on the surrenderers of Maine, the losers of Guienne and Normandy, and all foothold on the soil of France. It was an unhappy thing again for Margaret, that the good Duke of Gloucester should have been opposed to her marriage with the king, and that he should thus have been brought into more active enmity with the Dukes of Suffolk and Somerset, since as a woman, owing her elevation in some sort to Suffolk, whom she had personally kept abroad before her accession, and as a woman piqued by the Duke of Gloucester's preference for another woman to be his cousin's bride, she was naturally more deeply engaged on the side of the bad, ambi-

tious men whom she found her weak husband's ministers, or rulers rather, and friends, whom she found in some sort the masters of her own destiny; and whom, by every motive of gratitude, judgment, and interest, she was bound to regard her friends until she should find them otherwise. For the same causes it is natural that she should have regarded the good Duke of Gloucester as her enemy; and that she should have been easily led to believe, what was of course daily dinned into her ears by the ministers in power, that he was a traitor, secretly conspiring the death of the king, and aiming at the succession of the crown.

On this point I have been somewhat diffuse, because on it have been founded the only serious charges that ever have been brought against this high-spirited and unhappy princess, whom the Yorkish writers naturally calumniated, as an enemy dangerous even when conquered, and whom in after days the Lancastrians cared not to defend, because she was loaded with popular odium, as a detested foreigner—it seems characteristic, by the way, of the Anglo-Saxon blood in all times and places, the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, England and the United States, to detest and calumniate all foreigners, unless they are patriot men or singing women—considering it well enough to have a French scapegoat for the crimes of their party, when they had criminals enough of their own to defend.

Gloucester was committed to the Tower on false charges of treason, and a few days afterwards was found murdered in his bed, while under the ward of his uncle the Cardinal, and the Duke of Suffolk. The fine lines of Shakspeare will here readily occur to all—

Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest
But may imagine how the bird was dead,
Although the hawk soar with unblooded beak;

and doubtless the popular voice rightly affixed the guilt to these two noblemen, neither of whom long survived him, and one of whom, his uncle, is said to have died in the agonies of a guilty conscience. But I must protest against such reasoning, or sophistry rather, as the following of Hume's, for which I am bold to assert, as he indeed almost admits, there is not a shadow of ground for suspicion, except the scene in Shakespeare, from which I have quoted above, and in which, to heighten the effect, he has introduced Margaret assisting and sustaining Suffolk. "What share the queen had in this guilt," says this great, though most partial historian, "*is uncertain* ; her usual activity and spirit made the public conclude, *with some reason*, that the duke's enemies durst not have ventured on such a deed without her privity. But there happened, soon after, an event of which she and *her favorite*, the Duke of Suffolk, *bore* incontestably the whole odium." The event alluded to is the cession of Maine, and the loss of other provinces consequent on it. A few words in the above I have italicised, wishing to show how easily a writer may convey truth by the letter, and falsehood by the meaning, and show how easy to destroy a reputation by calumny, maintaining a show of candor. *Is uncertain*, says Hume ; and in one sense it is uncertain, for there is not even an iota of pretended evidence, or even suspicion against her. If it be uncertain whether a person is guilty until he shall be proved innocent, few of us, it is to be feared, shall go unwhipped of justice. *With some reason* ; the reason seems to be that, because she was active and spirited, she therefore was likely to have committed a cold-blooded, cowardly murder. But the truth is, that to grant the spirit and activity, at that date, is to beg the question ; at this period she had displayed neither ; they grew with the growth of subsequent events. Hitherto it appears that she, the king,

and country, were equally under the absolute control of the triumvirate—Somerset, Winchester, and Suffolk. By the words *her favorite*, the historian basely insinuates what he dare not assert, and he can show no possible suspicion of such a ground for calumny, that Margaret was an untrue wife of Henry ; an accusation, it needs not to say, which every action, every hour of her life—full of devotion to himself while living, to his memory when dead—brand with the living lie. The odium of the loss of the French provinces she *bore* incontestably. True, grave historian ! most incontestably she did *bear* it. But read as thou didst mean it to be read while writing it, this passage means, and is understood by ninety-nine out of a hundred who do read it, as meaning deserved to bear it. She was a beautiful, young, admired girl, living with an old doting father, who kept up a court literally of mountebanks and fiddlers, held *cours plénières des amours*, and fancied himself a troubadour ; and there is no more likelihood that she should have ever known the articles of the secret treaty made between her uncle, Charles of Anjou, and the ambassador plenipotentiary of a foreign prince, concerning a matter which in no earthly way concerned her, than that the daughter of an English nobleman of the present day should know or care anything about the articles of her own marriage settlement, beyond the amount of her pin money, and the magnificence of her trousseau.

If it mean anything, this charge would go to imply—like the mad howl raised by the brute terrorists and insane *canaille* of Paris against the Austrian Marie Antoinette—that it was her object to dismantle England for the benefit of her native country, and to stamp upon her, what was then in her adopted country held a stigma, the name of Frenchwoman. But let it go for what it is worth, I have noted it more to show how history is written, and to let my readers judge how it ought to

be written, than because I consider her character in this point of view as requiring justification or defence. If Mr. Hume meant to say that Margaret was privy to the murder of the Duke of Gloucester, it was his duty as an historian to declare her aloud a murderess; if he meant to assert that she was Suffolk's paramour, it was his duty as a man to hold her up as an object of abhorrence to all pure and virtuous women; if he was prepared to show that she merited the odium which fell on her for traitorously surrendering the Anglo-Gallican provinces, it was his duty as a patriot to pronounce her a traitress. But, as he dared not say that there was a shadow of reasonable suspicion against her on any of the three points, he had no right to insinuate, and by fair words produce false impressions. If it be an author's duty "naught to extenuate, nor aught set down in malice," it is certainly one of his blackest sins to set down the truth so as to make it convey a monstrous and malicious lie.

Now it was barely two years after this, Winchester being dead, and Richard, Duke of York, the last Regent of France, now deprived of his occupation, was beginning to stir in England, that at the time when Hume himself admits that "the people considered Margaret as a Frenchwoman, and a latent enemy of the kingdom," the House of Commons impeached Suffolk, and accused him of high treason, on some score of false and absurd charges, one of which was that "he had persuaded the French king to invade England with an armed force, in order to depose the king." It is needless to say that no such invasion was ever contemplated, and that even Margaret was herself fighting for her husband's crown, and actually setting squadrons in the field; she either never attempted, or never was able to effect, a French co-operation landing. It is also curious that when the Commons abandoned their false charges

of treason, and accused Suffolk of misdemeanors only, the king himself, before the peers and commons, pronounced sentence of banishment against Suffolk, a sentence which Margaret could *incontestably* have prevented, had she chosen, and must have chosen to prevent had she loved him, for whatever she could do with the wily Beaufort, the able Somerset, and the shrewd Suffolk, she certainly could wind the weak Henry to her will; though she did so only, so far as history shows, for his own good.

Suffolk was banished, however, without the queen's moving in his favor; and as he went to France for refuge, "a captain of a vessel was there employed to intercept him in his passage; he was seized near Dover, his head struck off on the side of a long boat, and his body thrown into the sea. No inquiry was made after the actors and accomplices in this atrocious deed of violence." An admission which does not go far to inculpate Margaret, as she *incontestably* had frequently thereafter the power both to inquire after and to punish both actors and accomplices, had she cared to do so; and the weakest point of her character was that she was not one wont to let vengeance sleep, when the power was in her hand to avenge.

At a later period than this, in 1551, further machinations took place for the overthrow of the Duke of Somerset, and after the rebellion of Cade, which all men judged to have been instigated by Richard, Duke of York, he himself took up arms and marched to London; but finding the gates shut against him, he fell back, disbanded his army, and retired to Wigmore, where no attempt was made by the queen, or her friends, to avenge the wrongs of Suffolk, or to punish her enemy York. It is certain that the true hereditary right to the crown of England was not in Henry VI., and that it was in Richard, Duke of York. Still Henry was not himself an usurper; he had inherit-

ed his crown, after two continuous, prosperous, and uninterrupted reigns, from his grandfather, to whose accession the parliament of England had assented. It is true, again, that not only Richard of York, the true heir to the throne, but that Henry was as incapable, weak, and as unfit to govern as the unhappy Richard, whom his own ancestor, Harry of Bolingbroke, had dethroned and succeeded ; and that, of consequence, the same right of revolution—if one may coin such a right—which justified Harry of Bolingbroke in discrowning, and the Parliament in superseding the imbecile Richard II., would justify Richard of York in dethroning, and the Parliament in deposing the no less imbecile Henry VI.

Still a king *de facto* can never be to blame for defending the crown which he has in possession, especially if that possession came to him in regular line of succession. This is a maxim which in the worst times, save the Wars only of the Roses, is of universal application ; nor can his adherents be held guilty of treason for succoring or maintaining him.

Margaret was called to the English throne by competent authorities, was acknowledged queen by the parliament, received as queen by the people, and she had every right, nay, it was her special duty, to defend in every way befitting her, the kingdom of her husband, of herself, and their posterity. That age deemed the direct appeal to arms, a course befitting woman. And ill-mated as she was, to a womanish lord, she appealed to them, and used them manfully, if in vain. The narrative of her personal adventures is full of interest and excitement. She was a great, high-hearted, brave, and noble woman ; if she was something masculine and unsparing, it was an age that needed manhood, and there was no man on the throne but she ; it was an age of ruthlessness and vengeance, and she had great wrongs to avenge. Her bravery in peril, her constancy in the

midst of ruin were gorgeous. Let peace preachers say as they may, Margaret of Anjou will be held, and in old Roman phrase *jure habeatur*, one of the heroines of England.

Thus far we have considered the life and character of this great-minded and heroic woman, rather in a general than in a particular light, and with a view rather to elucidating the questions of that disputed right of succession to the English throne, on which the bloody struggle of the Roses was founded, and of the accusations brought against her by her enemies, than of entering at large into her great energies, wonderful perseverance, and eminent manly virtues—the virtues, by the way, which were most requisite to her in the stormy times among which her lot was cast. We now come to the period at which those virtues began to display themselves the most signally, the period namely, at which commenced the deadly civil strife, which was not brought to an end until thirty years of almost incessant warfare—and that of the bloodiest and most pitiless nature—had deluged England, from her metropolis to her remotest provinces, with knightly and patrician gore.

We showed, that in truth the House of York had the true title to the throne as lineal descendants—through Anne, Countess of Cambridge, and sister of the last Earl of March, who was the mother of Richard Duke of York—of Philippa, only daughter of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, *second son* of Edward III. of England. The line of Edward the Black Prince, *eldest son* of that warlike king, became extinct with Richard II., who was murdered in Pontefract castle, leaving no issue legitimate or illegitimate, in 1399. Henry, Duke of Lancaster, who deposed and succeeded Richard, under the title of Henry IV., was descended directly from the Duke of Lancaster, *third son* of Edward III., and therefore could of course lay no claim, founded on birthright, to the throne, so long as any heirs of the *second*

son of Edward should be in existence, which it has been shown there were in the persons of Richard of York and his family of sons, which was numerous.

In reply to this it was stated that Richard II., son of the Black Prince, of the eldest house, had been dethroned by an unanimous vote of the Parliament, on account of his total incapacity to govern ; and that the vacant throne had been conferred by the same power, in whom it was competent to confer it, on Henry of Lancaster, surnamed Bolingbroke, of the *third son* ; which house, though confessedly *second* of the family, were by that act of Parliament, and by quiet possession of the throne during two reigns, and the peaceful transmission of it to a third prince, in direct succession, thus rendered first of the realm ; and if not right heirs, at least right owners of the throne.

It is easy to see that the question is an intricate one, and difficult to be solved ; and, though it is evident that the hereditary right was in the house of York, that there was no valid reason why the wearer of the crown, administrator of the government, and king *de facto*, should not defend the realm to the possession of which he had come by direct succession from father and grandfather ; the right of the former being assured by no less an authority than that of the two houses in Parliament assembled. All jurists hold that the adherents of a king *de facto*, such as was Henry VI., Charles II., and the First and Second Georges of England, cannot be held liable to charges of treason for the maintenance of existing royalties ; and, though the bloody character of the age and the fierce partisan spirit, which succeeded to the extinction of chivalry, and not yet mitigated by the regular systematic principles of modern warfare, led to the perpetration of savage slaughters and sanguinary reprisals during the reign of the unhappy Henry, the officers of

the Long Parliament never pretended to punish the cavaliers of Charles I. for treason, until after the deposition and decapitation of Charles, when the Republic and the Protectorate had in their turn become the governments *de facto*. In the two lamentable affairs of the '15 and the '45, it is needless to say that neither of the pretenders ever attempted to hold an adherent of the house of Hanover, the actual kingly house, as traitors ; though they had never suffered their own claim to fall into abeyance, as it appears the house of York had done, through the reigns of Henry IV. and Henry V., but had continually adhered to the title of kings of England, and ever kept up the semblance of a court at St. Germain's, under the protection of Louis XIV.

If, therefore, the adherents to the possessor of such a title to the throne as Henry VI. held, cannot be held amenable on the charge of supporting, much less can the possessor himself be held amenable or culpable for defending, his title. Such a possessor was Henry VI. of Lancaster beyond all question—and taking into consideration his imbecility of character, amounting almost to pious idiocy, not far removed from that of the sixteenth French Louis, it was not only justifiable, but right and glorious in Margaret, to defend the inheritance of her father and her children, against those whom she had ever been taught to believe, and probably did believe, in all sincerity, to be the traitors and usurpers of her husband's and his house's power.

The case of the deposition of Richard II. and the accession of Henry IV. in his place, is in every way precisely analogous to that of James II. and William III. of England, except that the former revolution was performed in a more cruel, and martial, and less deliberative age than the latter. It may be added that Henry IV. rather received the confirmation of the popular voice to a crown which he had grasped, while William was called to the defence of religion and liberty, and was rewarded

by the crown which he had so defended. The difference is, however, rather nominal than real, and it cannot be disputed that although the claim of the Yorkists was the truer by descent, that of the Lancastrians was at this period true enough by possession, and they had been both fools and cowards had they not striven to the last in defence of an inheritance so splendid, even then, as the diadem of England. It is not the least strange thing concerning this strange succession of struggles, during which men of the highest birth and eminence changed their opinions as they did their coats--almost daily, with as little reason asked, or reproach incurred—that in the final conflict the Lancastrian claimant, Henry of Richmond, Duke of Brittany, was a double usurper, possessing no title *de jure*, and none of course *de facto*, to the seat from which he ejected Richard III., the last heir male of the house of York—though, thanks to Shakspeare, he has come down to us as the gallant asserter of good rights, and righteous avenger of foul wrongs done to the lawful line of English majesty.

We have dwelt on this so long, in order that, after having previously shown that the claim of the Lancastrians to the throne as right owners is entirely worthless, we may not be charged with inconsistency for defending Margaret of Anjou in her maintenance of her husband's and son's title to the crown in dispute; and having, we trust, made this apparent to the understanding of every intelligent reader, proceed at once to the narration of stirring events and striking scenes, throughout which she conducted herself through all adversities and spites of fortune, if not as a very amiable or very gentle, at least as a true-hearted, masculine-minded, great, and glorious woman, wife, and mother.

Richard, Duke of York, the first claimant in the order of time to the crown of England, had served under the Govern-

ment of Henry VI. as regent of France, in which high office he succeeded the great Duke of Bedford; and subsequently as commander of Ireland—which unhappy country was, as it has ever been within the memory of recorded history, distracted, turbulent, and ready for rebellion—and by holding such offices under the crown had virtually admitted its authority. While he was still in Ireland, Cade's well known Kentish rebellion had occurred, and had in the end been defeated, and to this it was believed that Richard was at the least privy, if he were not actually instigator of it; the court were, however, too weak to punish or impeach him openly, and perhaps lacked evidence whereby to show his connexion with the rebels. From this time, however, it is certain that his friends and partisans began to lay claim for him to the throne by right of descent; and soon after, in 1452, he actually levied an army, and advanced to the gates of London, demanding a reformation and the dismissal of the Duke of Somerset—then the minister—from all authority and power. He found, however, to his great surprise the gates shut against him, and on his retreat into Kent was pursued by Henry with very superior force, and compelled to go into retirement; his own popularity, no less than the weakness of the court, and it may be, the imbecile good nature of the king, rendered it unwise or impossible to attain or punish him. It is to be observed, however, that at this period he laid no claim to the kingly title, professing merely to be the redresser of the wrongs of the people, and the champion of a popular reformation. During this period he lived in retirement at his seat of Wigmore, on the borders of Wales, awaiting the advent of times more propitious to the undertaking, which kept him till he was too weary of tarrying for their coming.

The following year, after a gleam of transient success (during which Bordeaux and a portion of Gascony were recovered for

the moment), the English were severely defeated in France, their leader Shrewsbury slain, and all hopes of the recovery of the French provinces totally extinguished and for ever. At about the same time a son, Edward, was born to Henry by Margaret, the Frenchwoman, who was already accused by the people in general of the treacherous surrender of the English conquests. Again, the birth of an heir male to the crown, by excluding the house of York from all chance of a peaceful succession, rendered its partisans more zealous and urgent for instant action. Within a brief space Henry, always incapable and imbecile, fell into such a fit of melancholy moodiness that he became unable even to go through the pageantry, and support the semblance of royalty. The Queen and Council were unable to resist the voice of the peers and great barons, yielded perforce, and saw Somerset sent to the tower, and Richard Duke of York appointed Lieutenant of the kingdom, with almost all the authority of royalty, which his friends, and perhaps the Parliament itself, would not have been unwilling to see him assume in style and title, as for the moment he had it in reality. But Richard, though he was not "without ambition," was, as it seems, "without the illness should attend it;" and by his moderate and amiable conduct during his possession of the regency discouraged his own party, without gaining any gratitude from the court; and perhaps, in spite of his good intentions, in the end caused rather evil than good to England by his very virtue, since he allowed his enemies to draw to a head, and gather both force and animosity for a struggle which even then the most far-sighted men perceived to be inevitable. It was but a short time before, emboldened by the partial recovery of Henry, and by the timidity or conscientiousness of the Duke of York, the Queen's party recovered the ascendancy,

released Somerset from the tower, and annulled the authority of the Duke.

Then indeed Richard felt his danger, and saw that it was time to act; or that he must fall, and his house perish with him. He took arms, though still without claiming the title of king, advanced on London, and the Lancastrians advancing to meet him, gave them battle near St. Albans—the first in which blood was shed in this disastrous struggle—and, with small loss to himself, beat them decidedly, five thousand persons being slain on the field; among whom were the Duke of Somerset, the Earls of Northumberland and Stafford, and the gallant Lord Clifford, by whose son so fierce and revengeful a part was played in these wars theretofore. The king fell into the hands of the duke, who treated him with the utmost courtesy and respect, and the question now seemed at rest for ever. But the duke again hesitated, and was contented with the restoration of his protectorates, and indemnity to all the Yorkists, and the revocation of all the grants which had been made by the crown since the death of Henry V.

Margaret, however, perceiving doubtless that the termination of these measures must inevitably be the ultimate exclusion of her son from the throne, should the House of York hold the authority, influence, and resources of the crown, during the life of Henry—whether the latter nominally held the throne or no—resolved on a bold and instant stroke for supremacy, and early in the following year produced the king, again somewhat improved in health, before the houses, and caused him once more to resume the government, which the Duke of York did not oppose, and all things once again seemed settled on a sure and amicable foundation, terms being assented to by both parties, and an outward reconciliation patched up for the time, which, however, no one endowed even with common understanding

could expect to endure beyond the moment. After a brief breathing-pause of doubt, hesitation, and deception, a paltry chance affray, as it is termed in history—though in all probability got up on purpose by the Lancastrians, who at the time were in the ascendancy—between an attendant of the king and one of Warwick's followers, kindled a flame, which was quenched only in the best blood of England.

Both parties flew to arms : and after one fruitless effort at a rising, rendered abortive by the treachery of Sir Andrew Wallop, which compelled Warwick again to retreat beyond the sea, that great soldier landed in Kent with the Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of March, the eldest son of Richard, afterwards Edward Duke of York, and thereafter Edward IV. of England ; received by the Archbishop of Canterbury he entered London in triumph, and shortly afterwards once again utterly defeated the royalists at Northampton, partially owing to the treason of Lord Grey de Ruthin, who commanded the king's van, and deserted to the enemy in the very heat of action. In this action fell, as usual, many of the flower of the nobility, to whom throughout these wars little quarter was given by their fellow nobles, in the shock of battle, in the pursuit, or in cold blood after capture ; and in it likewise was first shown the laudable example of sparing the common people, which was set here by Warwick and the Earl of March, but which continued as much to be the rule of conduct during the struggle of the rival Roses, as did the merciless and wanton butchery of knights and nobles.

Nor is it easy to explain this, contrary as it has been at every other period of English history to the habits and character of that people ; for it cannot be accounted for by any system of reprisals or vengeance for kindred blood ; for, with a habit and versatility unprecedented among Englishmen, and since equally

abhorred and unpractised, there was scarce a noble on either side, even to the princes of the blood themselves, who did not change his party several times, and fight shoulder to shoulder with those whose hands were yet reeking with the gore of their children, their brethren, or their parents. We can only seek for a solution of these two strange peculiarities of this individual civil war, in the fact not only that it was a *rude*, but that it was a *transition* age; that ancient landmarks were all broken down, and no new ones erected in their places; that the principles, the amenities, the courtesies, of the chivalric era had fallen into disuse, while the rules of a strict social morality, of obedience to the laws as paramount to all private passions, and a legitimate and civilized warfare, had not yet been invented. Add to this the disturbance of men's minds by the constant recurrence of revolutions and the love of innovation, riot, and rebellion for the mere sake of rebellion, which it seems to be their inevitable tendency to produce. The king once more fell into the hands of his opponents, who as usual treated him with gentleness and respect, perhaps themselves affected by the simplicity and innocence of his life; perhaps fearing to deal with him summarily, owing to the repute for sanctity which these qualities had procured for him with the people who seem to have adored him.

In this instance, however, the respect shown to him was limited to his person, not extended to his power; for Richard of York, though he sought not even now violently or perforce to dethrone him, laid claim to the regal title and authority before the house of Peers, who debated the question tranquilly and gravely for several successive days, and at length decided that the title of the house of York was good, but that in virtue of Henry's peaceful succession to the throne and quiet tenure of it during thirty-eight years, he should be allowed to retain the title

and dignity of king during his life, the present administration and future inheritance of the crown being in Richard and his heirs. A more temperate and equitable, or, at the same time, a more inexpedient or temporizing decision could not have been come at—as if it could be even imagined that a princess of the genius, energy, resources, spirit, and perseverance—added to an almost more than masculine courage—of Margaret, would have submitted to so weak a compromise, leaving an empty symbol of command “to be,” as Scott has written of a greater exile,

“A dagger in the hand,
From which our strength has wrenched the brand.”

Even before the act was passed, or the authority fixed in his hand, she had levied a royal army in Durham, after the defeat of Northampton, having fled thither with her infant son, and was already at the head of twenty thousand men, when the Duke of York, fancying himself about to crush the incipient rebellion, marched at the head of five thousand to meet her, and madly disdaining to take shelter behind walls from a woman's war, came out into the open field and delivered battle. But Margaret was not the woman, nor Clifford who commanded under her the leader, to be treated with so foolish a punctilio. The army of the Yorkists was totally defeated, the duke himself slain in action; his son, the Earl of Rutland, an amiable youth of seventeen, taken prisoner and savagely slaughtered by Warwick, and the Earl of Salisbury with many other captive nobles beheaded at Pomfret castle. The dead body of the duke was decapitated and his head set on the gates of York, covered with a paper diadem in derision of his title, by Margaret's express command; and on this has been founded a prevalent charge against her—amounting well nigh to a total condemnation—of savage and unusual ferocity. It was a bad deed, in truth; and

far would we be from defending or even palliating it. Still it must not be unduly magnified or set down in malice. The age was rude and cruel, the war unusually savage, and this deed has been too much mixed up with the murder of Rutland, in which there is no evidence whatever that Margaret bore any part. Moreover, it does not appear that Margaret was ever guilty of any special act of cruelty, apart from the relentless and cold-blooded policy common to both parties, which had become, as I have stated, the rule of the war, and for which she must not be blamed. To persons engaged in the desperate game of war, involving the liberties, the lives, the happiness of thousands, perhaps millions, and through countless generations, single and ridiculous acts become trifles—perhaps may be the result of a pardonable and even merciful policy. The senseless clay of York could not feel the blow which decapitated it—the disembodied spirit must be far above, or far below, the degradation of an insult offered to the shell—and if Margaret fairly believed, as she well might do at that period, that such derision, not of the dead York, but of what she deemed the dead York's usurped title, could favorably affect her son's claim, there was in truth much less cruelty in mutilating one dead body, than in slaying or causing the slaughter of many hundred thousand living men. But the former case offends our delicacy, shocks our nerves, awakens our individual sympathies, and therefore we *shriek*—as Carlisle would say—horror over it; the latter is sensual, legitimate, and performed to the sound of martial music and the applauding cries of admiring nations, and therefore we throw up our caps, and instead of shrieking over the corpses of the slaughtered millions, cry, glory! glory! We are no great admirers of either; but we do think that Margaret, as the world goes now, would be held justified in fighting for her own and her son's royalty—much more was she in the then opinion of

mankind, the adverse question never having been mooted ; and if she had a right to risk the lives of tens of thousands to win or retain that which philosophy calls a bauble, but which no philosopher we ever heard of refused to wear, it matters very little whether she stuck a paper crown on York's cold head or not. It was not a very womanly deed, it is true ; but Margaret takes no claim for being a very womanly woman. On the whole, a great deal too much has been made of the matter, as there has of many individual acts of the great Napoleon. Individual leaders, sporting with the destiny of nations, and squandering human blood like rain-water, must be judged by wholesale, by the righteousness of their causes, the sincerity of their convictions, the truth of their principles, and the inward meaning of their character—not by single deeds, which, if the whole be good, were necessary to the producing of that good ; if evil, are but as raindrops in the ocean of iniquity.

This terrible defeat of the Yorkists effected no permanent good, however, to the Lancastrians, for after several other fierce actions, in which victories, defeats, and cruelties were pretty equally balanced between the parties, Margaret fell back into the north, while Edward, by his father's death Duke of York, entered London, and was at once proclaimed King of England, under the title of Edward IV., in the year 1461. Still the fierce energy of Margaret failed not, and in the north she speedily collected an army of sixty thousand men, which encountering Edward and the Earl of Warwick on Towton field near Tadcaster, met with a rout and slaughter, in which thirty-six thousand men fell in the action or in the pursuit, and among them half the remaining nobility of the Lancastrians.

The ex-king and Margaret again escaped ; the latter into Scotland and thence into France, from both which kingdoms she obtained succors, and only three years later than the rout

of Towton, again invaded England, again gave battle to Edward at Hexham, in Northumberland, and again suffered a defeat so disastrous, that her army was utterly scattered and herself separated from all her attendants, and forced to seek asylum in the depths of Hexham forest.

Here she gave as singular an example of personal intrepidity and of the effect produced by high-born magnanimity in adverse times over low and even malignant nature, as she had before given of royal perseverance and indefatigable energy. Having fallen into the hands of robbers, she was despoiled of her ornaments, and treated with the utmost indignity; but while they were quarrelling or carousing over the booty, she made her escape from them at the dead hour of midnight, and concealing herself and the young prince in a brake, awaited the coming morn. With the first light she was surprised by a single pursuer, and taking desperate counsel in desperate affairs, she threw herself on his generosity, which argues in herself the possession of a generous mind.

“This is the son of your king,” she cried; “to your charge I commit him, be his guardian and his savior.”

Nor was her generosity deceived, for he did protect and save her, and by his means she escaped to Flanders, and thence to the small provincial court of her poor powerless father, King René of Provence, where she dwelt many years in deep seclusion, but without ever resigning the hope, or rather the determination, of returning and striking another blow for England's royal crown. Less fortunate, Henry was taken, and though treated with some show of courtesy, was immured in the tower. Less fortunate, all her noble friends who survived the rout of Hexham, suffered forthwith upon the scaffold; and surely the sceptre seemed to have departed from the house of Lancaster.

But still solitary and secluded, in poverty, obscurity, and

sorrow, that stern and resolute woman hoped on, and conspired and determined. At length the time arrived, and the man. Warwick, the king-maker, unjustly and ungratefully treated by Edward, came over to Margaret's side, and after many a year of negotiation and intrigue with France and Burgundy, obtained succors, which enabled him to invade England, and in eleven days after his landing, he who had made had unmade, and Edward, himself dethroned, was in turn a fugitive from his crown and country.

Edward, however, with energy equal to the emergency, himself obtained succor in Burgundy and Zealand, landed in Yorkshire, outmanœuvred Warwick who had advanced to meet him at Leicester, entered London, and again became master of Henry's person and his briefly born authority. A few days later a fearful action was fought at Barnet, in which Warwick would have won but for one of those blind chances which often decide the fate of battles. The cognizance on Edward's banner was the SUN OF YORK, that of De Vere, Earl of Oxford, a *merlet*, or five-rayed star, and in the confusion and dust of the *melée* the latter nobleman, who commanded the Lancastrian reserve, was in the act of bringing them up to a decisive charge, when he was charged by mistake and driven off the field by his own friends, and while all were in disorder, Edward restored the fight and won the day. Warwick fell with his brother Montacute. No quarter was given by the victors, and, with small loss to the Yorkists, the Lancastrian cause was annihilated.

On that very day Margaret with her son, now a youth of eighteen years and of singular promise, landed at Weymouth, and learned but too soon the fatal news of Warwick's death and her husband's renewed captivity. For a moment she was paralysed, but her indomitable spirit could not even now be

daunted. Once more she gathered forces, only once more to be defeated on her last field at Tewksbury. All her adherents who survived the rout and had taken sanctuary in a neighboring church, were dragged out and instantly beheaded—meet prelude for what was to follow.

Margaret and her son were brought captives before Edward, who addressed the brave boy insultingly. "How dare you," he cried, "enter my realm with lifted lance and banner flying?" "To recover my father's kingdom," replied the youth, undauntedly, "and his heritage from his grandfather and father to him, and from him to me lineally descended."

Edward, pitiless and conscious of no generous feeling, smote him in the face with his gauntlet; his brothers George and Richard, Clarence and Gloucester, aided by Hastings and Sir Thomas Gray, stabbed him to death with their daggers almost before the face of his devoted mother. That mother was thrown into the tower, in which her husband died but a few days afterwards, not without strong suspicion of having been murdered—even by the hand, as it has been stated, though probably without foundation, of the Duke of Gloucester. Here she languished for four years, until ransomed by Lewis XI. of France, the most politic, the most despotic, the least generous and most avaricious prince in Europe—of such strange composition are men made—for 50,000 crowns. He gave her an asylum in his realms, and she died, but not until 1482, "the most unhappy queen, wife, and mother in Europe," says Voltaire; and perhaps, had it not been for that very Voltaire, there had never died one more unhappy in the person of Marie Antoinette of France, who possessed much of the spirit though none of the genius of Margaret; while their husbands were distinguished by so total a lack of both, that it is necessary to keep constantly in mind their passive domestic virtues, before we

can decide whether it is pity or contempt we feel as we read of their fortunes and most cruel fate.

To conclude with a few short words. In her after reputation, Margaret of Anjou seems to us to have been even more unhappy than in her life. Less fortunate even than "those brave men who lived before Agamemnon," as Horace sings, "but who all fell unwept and lie entombed in endless night, because they found no bard divine," Margaret of Anjou lives for ever branded with black reproach, because she found the divinest bard of all, immortal and inimitable Shakspeare.

Faultless she was not—who is, or has been?—womanly she was not, according to our ideas of womanhood in these days when our young men are not ashamed to be ladylike—but for her own day, she was every inch a woman, every inch a queen, and every inch an English queen. Though she feared death as little as the boldest of her barons, she never unsexed herself by wearing arms or doing actual battle—she was neither traitoress, adulteress, nor murderess, as it has pleased Shakspeare to portray her, and the world to believe on his portraiture—but a true wife; a devoted mother; a great, brave, gallant woman. Her faults were those of her age; her virtues were her own. Whither she is gone we know not; but of this we may rest well assured, that wheresoever she now is the tongue of detraction can pierce or rend her heart no longer.

Henry the Eighth,
AND HIS WIVES.

1521.



HENRY THE EIGHTH, AND HIS WIVES.

IN no character, perhaps, within the whole range of human history, are the fatal and destructive influences of unlimited power, a subservient ministry, and the opportunity of unbridled gratification, on a mind naturally selfish and addicted to pleasure, more clearly demonstrated than in that of the eighth Henry of England.

When he ascended the throne of England, on the decease of his father, Henry VII., the conqueror of Bosworth field—one of the coldest, cruellest, and most avaricious princes who ever sate on a throne—his accession was greeted with universal joy and gratulation by all ranks and classes of society. Young, and of singularly vigorous and handsome frame, with a fine countenance and fresh complexion, a lively and spirited air, a perfect skill in every manly and athletic exercise, a very considerable proficiency in literature and the arts, Henry, at this time in his eighteenth year, was as unlike as possible to the bloated, unwieldy, peevish, and furious tyrant—with a face and a roar liker to those of an old lion than to the features and voice of a man—as we find him in later days, and as he is better known to most

readers, than as the gay and gallant prince, the beloved of his people, and the admired and courted of all Europe. Yet such he was in the earlier years of his reign; vehement, indeed, impetuous and impulsive, addicted to pleasure and magnificence, but graceful and gracious to his courtiers, and so popular among the lower orders—to whom his bold, blunt, jovial manhood, and his own manly skill in the lists, at tilt or tournament, in the chase, and in the battle-field, had greatly endeared him—that the memory of his after tyranny has been almost forgotten, and he is, even to this day, rather a favorite of the lower orders, especially in London, who still talk of the good old times of Bluff King Harry, although those good old times were stained with more blood, and blackened with more atrocity than any previous or succeeding era.

The cause of this may, perhaps, in some degree be traced to the fact that in the reign of Henry, as likewise in that of his manly hearted daughter, Elizabeth, who is, like her father, to this day a historic favorite, the executions on the scaffold and at the stake, and the oppressions and exactions of all kinds fell mainly on the upper orders—that it was noble, princely, and royal blood, which flowed like water through the latter portion of his reign; and that the humble and the lowly born were treated, even when guilty of open rebellion, with unusual leniency and tenderness. But still more, I believe it to be attributable to the splendor and pomp of his court, to the comeliness and magnificence of his person, which always influence the minds of the vulgar, his jovial and hearty good humor—for, when not thwarted and enraged by opposition, he was of a joyous and even generous temper—and his success in all his foreign enterprises, which could be enjoyed and appreciated by all his subjects, while his severities and oppressions were uncared for except by the few who suffered them.

His reign must ever be memorable for the great work of reformation which was performed therein, owing in the first instance to the passions entirely, and in no sort to the principles of the king ; and prosecuted to the end through his capricious humors, and fury at all opposition to his will, not from any political object or religious conviction. So closely, however, was this suppression of the old monastic establishments, and this secession of the church of England from that of Rome, connected with the strange story of his conjugal relations, that I shall touch on the facts incidentally in the order of their occurrence, not treat them under a particular head.

And as the first step which led, through the passions of one man, to the emancipation of millions from servitude to priestcraft, and which, so far as we can judge, is the primary cause of England's subsequent and present greatness, I come to the first marriage of the youthful prince with the widow of his elder brother Arthur, the Prince of Wales—Catharine the Infanta of Arragon, fourth daughter of those famous sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella. Arthur having died within a few months of the wedding without issue, Henry the VIIIth, desirous of maintaining his alliance with Spain, and unwilling to restore the Infanta's dowry of 200,000 ducats, compelled Henry, whom he created Prince of Wales on the occasion, to be contracted to the Infanta. Henry, who was but twelve years of age, while the princess was nineteen, made all the resistance of which such a boy is capable ; but the king persisting, and a dispensation being obtained from the Pope, the espousals were contracted between the parties in the year of our Lord 1502.

Seven years afterwards, when the prince was in his nineteenth year, he succeeded to the throne, and by the advice of his grandmother, the Countess of Richmond and Derby, he retained as his cabinet the most eminent and least popular of his

father's ministers, by whose advice, and that of the countess, he at length determined, though contrary as it would seem to the opinion of the primate of England, and also to the dying desire of Henry VII., who appears to have repented of the measure, and urged his son to remonstrate against it; he at length, I say, determined in spite of the great disparity of years between, and her previous connexion with his own brother, to marry the princess Catharine; and accordingly the marriage was performed and consummated. Her well known virtues, the modesty and sweetness of her temper and disposition, her beauty, and the great affection which she bore to the king; the greatness of her dowry; the advantages of the Spanish alliance; the necessity of counterbalancing the power of France; and the propriety of fulfilling the late king's contracts, were the principal arguments adduced whereby to convince the king. That they succeeded was probably from the weight of the political, rather than the personal considerations; for although Catharine was of fine person, engaging manner, and rare excellence of character, both as a woman and a queen, it is difficult to believe that passion or predilection could have influenced a youth of Henry's sensual and sanguine temperament towards one so much his senior, and otherwise so seriously disqualified for his bed. Still, however, it must be admitted that Henry lived with her, so far as can be ascertained, with perfect tenderness and satisfaction for many years; that he appointed her queen-regent of England during his absence in France at the head of his army; that he carried her with him into that kingdom, when he subsequently visited it in peace, to hold with his superb and splendid rival, Francis the First, that famous conference known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold; that he created her only daughter Mary, Princess of Wales; and that it was not until nearly eighteen years after their

union, when he was hopeless of having any male heir by Catharine, when he began to be alarmed by doubts of his daughter's legitimacy, and fears of the Scottish succession after his own demise—when last he was, as he asserted, tormented by religious scruples on that head, that he resolved to abrogate the marriage with the Infanta.

Even after he had resolved on this step, to which he was urged by the advice of his confessor, the Bishop of Lincoln, by the unanimous opinion of all the English prelates with the one exception of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, by the counsel of Wolsey, and his own doctrinal studies of Thomas Aquinas—and which was perhaps really expedient as a political measure for securing the succession of the English throne—he still visited her constantly, conducted himself towards her with all tenderness and respect, and never hinted the slightest dissatisfaction with her conduct and demeanor.

On the whole, I am disposed to regard the conduct of Henry in regard to Catharine of Arragon with less decided reprobation than almost any other action of his life; I think it justifiable to believe, judging from Henry's known addiction to polemical and theological studies, and his generally superstitious—for in a man so cruel and immoral, they cannot be termed religious—tendencies, that he was for once seriously sincere in his scruples; and, moreover, though it were a late period at which to discern the validity of such scruples, and a cold and hard measure to repudiate a blameless wife after eighteen years of undisturbed connexion, and to illegitimize her innocent offspring, those scruples were certainly valid, and the great probability is that the marriage would have been declared invalid, the princess Mary illegitimate, and that a civil war would have ensued, after the death of Henry, at the cost of much blood and treasure to England.

How far he was sincerely actuated by these views, it is now of course impossible to decide ; but it appears to be susceptible of clear proof, that he had mooted the question of divorce with Catharine of Arragon, before he had ever seen Anne Boleyn, to his sudden passion for whom his conduct at this crisis is often ascribed, and though that passion doubtless inflamed his scruples, and spurred him to more vehement action, it is certainly not fair to ascribe to it the origin of his intentions.

The truth seems to be, that he married Catharine in the first instance, from what were supposed to be at the time sufficient and satisfactory political reasons, but were afterwards discovered to be the very reverse ; that he had never any feelings towards her stronger than calm and moderate regard ; that the discovery of the probable ill consequences of the marriage, combined with the decay of her beauty, the increase of her years, and certain diseases to which she was liable, awoke his scruples, and perhaps excited some aversion to her person ; and that to these was added the last grain needed to turn the balance against the queen, the violent and sudden passion created on first sight of the beautiful Anne Boleyn.

The marriage of Henry with the queen had been consummated, only in consequence of dispensation from the Pope ; and, in order to abrogate it, on the ground that it was incestuous and therefore null and void, a papal bull was necessary ; and to this end, Clement, the ruling pontiff, was piled with seductions and cajoleries by Henry through his minister, the famous Wolsey, while Charles the First, King of Spain and Emperor of Germany, menaced him no less violently, in order to prevent a divorce against his aunt, on grounds so disgraceful.

For a time, Clement appears to have wavered, and been in truth inclined to the cause of Henry, and accordingly Cardinal Campeggio was sent legate to England, and a commission

was issued to him and Wolsey, in order to examine into the question in all its particulars.

They accordingly commenced their proceedings, by citing the king and queen, both of whom presented themselves in court, the former answering to his name ; Catharine, however, instead of answering, cast herself at the feet of the king, and uttered a harangue of the most pathetic and affecting, and at the same time of the most dignified and impressive character, which should have moved to the strongest sympathy and even doubt, if not to conviction, any hearts less obdurate than those of Henry and the cardinals ; after this, denying the jurisdiction of the court, with a low reverence to the king, she departed from the hall, and never would return to it. She was declared, therefore, contumacious, and the legate proceeded to try the case ; Henry declaring on her withdrawal, that he had never found cause to doubt her probity and honor, but that, on the contrary, she had ever been a dutiful, affectionate, and virtuous wife ; and that his only scruples were those concerning the legality of his espousals ; from the charge of encouraging these scruples, he, moreover, acquitted Cardinal Wolsey.

For some time, all things appeared to progress in the manner most consonant to the King's wishes ; but at the moment when Henry was confidently looking for a sentence in his favor, Campeggio prorogued the court on pretences wholly frivolous, until the first of October, and returned to Rome, when it was understood that he had burned the decretal bull which had been intrusted to him.

At this time, or a little earlier, Anne Boleyn makes her appearance on the court stage, having recently returned from the court of France, a young lady of high birth—being descended in the female line from the great houses of Norfolk, Ormond, and Hasting—of excellent accomplishments, and most

extraordinary beauty ; as is rendered unquestionable by the fine picture of Holbein, which was recently in the collection at Hampton Court, the palace of the great cardinal with whose downfall Anne's rise was consentaneous. This was the period, to use the beautiful words of an English poet,

When passion taught a monarch to be wise,
And gospel-light first dawned from Boleyn's eyes ;

though, in truth, it must be admitted that wisdom was little concerned, however might have been passion, in this question.

His passion for Anne, therefore, hourly increasing, and her virtues and modesty depriving him of all hopes otherwise than through an honorable marriage, added to this, the discovery of Clement's tergiversation and politic evasions being enforced upon him by the evocation from Rome, he resolved to have recourse to other methods than the papal court for the procurement of a divorce ; and, as a preliminary to these, he resolved on the destruction of his former prized and most trusted minister Wolsey. For above three years, the struggles of Henry to obtain a divorce had now endured, and with their close he regarded Wolsey in the most unfavorable light, though it was probable that the cardinal had in truth served him to the best of his ability. Anne, too, was hostile to him from a conviction that he would oppose her marriage, and his ruin was decreed, and no sooner decreed than consummated. He was dismissed from all his offices. York Place, afterwards the royal palace at Whitehall, his town residence, was confiscated to the royal use, and all his rich furniture, plate, and personal property. At times, indeed, half capriciously, the king would appear to relent towards his ancient favorite, but in the end he was abandoned to the hatred of his enemies, was arrested on a charge of high treason, and it is probable escaped a death on the scaf-

fold only by dying of a broken heart, at Leicester Abbey, on his way from the North to stand his trial. His last words were these—a memorable lesson to all those who put their trust in princes—"Had I but served God as diligently as I served the king, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs!"

He died, truly a great, but alas! not a wise man, nor good. Rest his ashes! Ambition was the *ignis fatuus* which toled him from his path, as since his time it has toled many a better man, and will, it may be, on earth for ever.

In the meantime, having obtained opinions from all the French and English, and several of the most distinguished of the Italian universities, in his favor, as well as the advice of the English bishops; having strengthened himself by an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Francis the First of France; and being assured of the support of his parliament, which at that period was a mere tool of oppression in the king's right hand, by which he invariably executed his most odious crimes and cruelties, he resolved to withdraw his obedience from the court of Rome, and privately celebrated his marriage with Anne Boleyn, whom he had previously created Marchioness of Pembroke.

It now became necessary that the marriage should be declared, in order to save the new queen's honor; accordingly he avowed it publicly, and proceeded—rather late in the course of things, one would say—to have the invalidity of his marriage with Catharine declared.

Up to this period, Henry had treated Catharine with all distinction and even regard, visiting her frequently and endeavoring to persuade her to cease her opposition to his divorce; now, however, finding her inflexible, he ceased to visit her, and allowed her to choose any of his palaces which she would for her abode. Ampthill, near Dunstable, was her choice, and in Dunstable she was cited to show cause, before the court of Cran-

mer, primate of England, and successor to Wolsey in the king's favor, why a divorce should not be pronounced against her. Refusing to appear or plead, she was again declared "contumacious," and her marriage was annulled as invalid and unlawful. A subsequent sentence ratified Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn; and that princess being shortly after brought to bed of a daughter, Elizabeth, that mighty and man-hearted woman, who afterwards swayed the sceptre with such puissance and renown, Mary, Princess of Wales, was declared illegitimate, as the issue of an unlawful marriage, and the daughter of Anne created Princess of Wales in her stead.

From this period, for some time, Anne Boleyn's felicity was the theme of every tongue; her ascendancy over the king, whose passion for her, it seems, increased rather than flagged on possession, grew daily; and so anxious was Henry to efface every trace of his former marriage, that he announced to the unhappy Catharine that she was to be styled, thenceforth, only the Princess Dowager of Wales, and endeavored by compulsory measures, and menaces against her servants, to make her acquiesce in that determination. For once, however, his iron will was vanquished, for so long as she lived she admitted no one to her presence, but with the wonted ceremonial; nor could any threats deter her servants from waiting on her according to her title and pretensions.

She died of a lingering illness, in her fiftieth year, at Kimbolton, in Huntingdonshire, having written a little while before her death a most tender and touching epistle to the king, styling him her "most dear Lord and Husband;" recommending to him his daughter, Mary, the sole pledge of their loves; and craving his protection for her maids and servants, concluding with the words, "I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things." Henry, it is said, was moved to tears, on

reading this last evidence of Catharine's unmerited affection ; but it is also stated, though the narrator, Burnet, is a historian of more prejudice and passion than veracity, that Queen Anne rejoiced inhumanly and indecently at the demise of her rival. I would fain disbelieve this ; for the general conduct of Anne Boleyn was ever gracious, gentle, mirthful, and compassionate. Sprightly and light-hearted, and leaning perhaps too much to a levity of manners which French usages sanctioned, but of unspotted character, of a forgiving, generous, and caressing disposition, loved in her life and regretted at her death, Anne Boleyn had scarce the character that could exult over the cold ashes of a rival—a rival whom she had vanquished in the tenderest points, and mediately deprived of happiness, of dignity, and, at the last, of life.

Thus Catharine departed ; born to high fortunes and advanced to higher, which she supported with equanimity and adorned with majesty and virtue ; doomed to calamity and ruin, which she endured with magnanimity and patience ; happier in her decease than most of her successors, as she was certainly superior to them all in elevation of character, in dignity of demeanor, in the decencies of public, and the virtues of domestic, life. As a queen she was good, as a private woman great. Happy they who can so support prosperity, and surmount adversity—of a truth, she proved herself, and that right royally, equal to either fortune.

From the moment of Henry's union with Anne Boleyn, the date of which we have outstripped a little, in the desire of completing the sad tale of the fate of Catharine uninterrupted, his whole character was strangely altered for the worse ; and from a rash, impulsive, passionate, and headstrong prince, violent in his will, impatient of opposition, and selfish in the extreme, he now became a barbarous, bloodthirsty tyrant ; second, if second,

only to Tiberius and Nero, whose cruelties upon the Christians he imitated almost to the letter—upon romanists and protestants alike, whosoever the first opposed his will.

This king had no religious principle in view in alienating England from the dominion—temporal first, and then spiritual—of the Bishop of Rome ; but as his lust of beauty first tempted him to resist Clement, so his lust of power and avarice of gold led him to the suppression of the monasteries, the confiscation of the church lands, and the appropriation to himself of all the privileges and puissance of the Pope.

During six years, the king's struggles with the Council of Rome had continued ; and during these, above three of which had been spent in a married state with Anne, his affections for her constantly increased ; nor is it wonderful that it should have done so, for she was a creature of the rarest beauty—tall, slender, and of perfect symmetry, with a skin of snow ; large, soft blue eyes, and dark auburn tresses ; nor were her accomplishments less remarkable than her personal charms.

Yet he had now triumphed over Rome ; had violently grasped all that he coveted of church property ; had been disappointed by the birth of a dead son ; and last, not least, had seen and loved Jane, daughter of Sir John Seymour—a young lady, lovely as the day, and possessing, in addition to her charms, in which she at least rivalled Queen Anne, the advantages of youth and novelty. From that moment, Henry seems not only to have ceased to love, but actually to have hated, Anne Boleyn ; for, in this odious and inhuman voluptuary, there were two singular characteristics—first, that licentious as he was, furious in his passion, and unrestrained in his will by any considerations human or divine, he appears rarely or never to have had recourse to gallantry or intrigue, or to have contemplated the possibility of gratifying his passions except by marriage—and second,

that his passion, so soon as it was satiated, was converted into a furious hatred, which could be satisfied only by the blood of the once loved object.

Those only of his victim wives whom he had never loved, he never hated ; and therefore suffered to live on in sorrowful, dishonored widowhood.

In his new passion for Jane Seymour, he was now set on the death of Anne ; and with him a resolution, once adopted, tarried not long time short of its fulfilment. Whom tyrants thirst to destroy, courtiers are soon found to accuse ; and the king having affected violent jealousy on the casual dropping of the queen's handkerchief during a tournament at Greenwich, charges of infidelity were preferred against her ; and she was cast into the tower, protesting her innocence with tears and invocations on the Supreme witness of all human hearts.

For her, in her utmost need, who had ever interceded for all sufferers, consoled all sorrowers, gratified all petitions during her prosperous hours, there was found no intercessor, no consoler, no petitioner. Her own uncle, Norfolk, preferring the ties of religious partisanship to those of blood, became her most embittered enemy ; and Cranmer alone, vainly for her, and in the end fatally for himself, strove to divert Henry from his brutal purpose. She was brought to trial before a jury of peers ; and, with her own brother, Lord Rochford—whose wife, a woman of infamous character of whom we shall hear more anon, was convicted of adultery and high treason—without one shadow of evidence, all spectators present pronouncing her wholly innocent, was sentenced to be burned alive or beheaded at the king's pleasure. Thereupon, turning her hands and eyes to heaven, "O Father!" she cried ; "O Creator! who art the way, the truth, and the life, thou knowest that I have not deserved this

fate;" and addressing her judges pathetically, she declared her innocence.

But innocence itself was powerless; and, Henry being determined not only to destroy this lovely and virtuous being, who had slept so softly in his bosom, but also to illegitimize her issue, she was induced, by terrors of the extreme sentence of the stake, to admit that, in consequence of her prior attachment to the Lord Piercy, a lawful impediment existed to her marriage with the king; whereupon, most reluctantly, the primate who presided, was compelled to declare the marriage null, and Elizabeth illegitimate—a compliance with the tyrant's will, which availed not in after days to save his own body from the flames of persecution.

Reconducted to the Tower, she sent her last message to the king, commending her daughter to his care, and again protesting her innocence; to the directors of the Tower she almost jested on her approaching fate; continued to the end serene and tranquil; and, submitting herself resignedly to the hands of the executioner of Calais, who had been imported as more skilful than any in England, died at a single blow, which, in her own words, sent her—it can scarce be doubted—"to be a saint in heaven."

On the morrow of her execution, Henry espoused Jane Seymour, unable in the rage of his passion to give so much of delay as even decency required, to the memory of one whom his cruel and remorseless heart had once doubtless loved as well as it was capable of loving anything.

Hoping, on the death of Anne Boleyn, to regain perhaps her legitimacy, the Lady Mary now sought to be reconciled with Henry; and, at length, after renouncing the hope, and owning her own mother's marriage unlawful, she was in some sort received into favor; but not for that would the old, incon-

sistent tyrant reject Elizabeth, who was so fortunate as to find grace with the new queen—a lady of sweet disposition and excellent virtue—who sorrowed for the fate of the rival she had unwillingly supplanted, and treated her orphan child with tenderness almost maternal.

During the short ascendancy of sweet Jane Seymour, the king's temper was either softened by her charms, and gentle, loving disposition, or diverted from his wonted cruelties by two dangerous insurrections in the North, for no burnings or beheadings sully the brief space of her pre-eminence over his affections.

But she died—as the ancients were wont to say “whom the gods love, die”—*young* ; nor survived Henry's short-lived love, to endure his indifference or incur the doom which ever followed his hatred. Within a year of her marriage, and two days after the birth of her son Edward—created, when not yet six days old, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester—Jane Seymour passed into a better world ; the best perhaps, the most beautiful, and certainly the happiest, not least so in the hour of her death, of Henry's queens. Yet though he loved her, his joy for the birth of an heir wiped away his grief for the death of a wife, almost before a tear was shed ; and it does not appear that her memory dwelt so much as an hour in his cruel and callous heart.

As hitherto the king's marriages had been dictated by passion and the preference for beauty, which he called affection, his next was to be founded on political motives ; and, after deliberating long between the niece of the emperor, and the relatives of Francis, he at length decided on marrying Ann of Cleves, whose picture he had seen and admired, and by whose hand he hoped to secure the support of the German princes, in case of war arising with the catholic powers, who threat-

ened hostilities in consequence of his secession from the Pope.

In this union he was disappointed, and, at first sight of the princess, who was in truth a coarse, overgrown, ill-natured woman, without grace or accomplishments, and speaking no language but Dutch, he conceived the most violent aversion to her, swore that she was a "Great Flanders mare," and that he could never bear her the least affection.

He continued, however, for some time to treat her with civility; and even affected still to place confidence in Cromwell, who had advised the match; although he had probably already determined on his ruin, as he had previously on that of Wolsey, when he suspected him of opposing his divorce from Catharine.

A new flame, however, soon possessed him; for he saw, and determined on raising to his throne, the exquisitely beautiful Catharine Howard, niece of the Duke of Norfolk, Cromwell's most deadly enemy, who used the influence of the lovely but profligate girl to ruin the good minister, even as Anne Boleyn had been used for the destruction of his great predecessor.

A bill of attainder was immediately issued against Cromwell, and one of divorce against the queen. The former resulted in the speedy execution of the minister; the latter in the no less speedy abrogation of Anne's marriage, on the plea of her previous contract with the Duke of Lorraine, added to Henry's assertion that he had not given his *inward consent* to the union. Anne, who was of an indifferent temper, exhibited no displeasure; accepted of the king's adoption as his sister, of precedence next to the king and his own daughters, with an annuity of three thousand pounds; and having on these terms assented to the divorce, lived and died in England, without manifesting any signs of pride, except in refusing to return to her own country after that affront.

Immediately thereafter, his marriage was consummated with Catharine Howard ; and so delighted was he with the charms of her person, her voluptuous temperament, and her consummate conversational powers and address, that he actually caused thanks to be returned to heaven in his private chapel for the felicity the conjugal state afforded him.

Hourly, however, did his cruelty and rage increase. Smithfield continually glowed with the funereal pyre of victims, sentenced to the flames without trial. To deny any articles of the catholic faith was even more fatal to the protestants than to assert the pope's supremacy to catholics. The stake and the faggot for the former ; for the latter the scaffold and the axe. So that a foreigner, then in London, writing to a friend, asserted, that "those in England who were against the Pope were burned, and those who were for him were hanged." Nor were the political sufferers less numerous, though more noble than they who fell for their faith ; among the former was the venerable Countess of Salisbury, the last of the great line of Plantagenet, who refused to lay her head on the block, or submit, untried of her peers, to an unjust sentence. She ran, to the last, frantically about the scaffold, tossing her grey, dishevelled locks, pursued by the executioner with his gory axe, slashing at her neck with ineffective blows, till at length she was hewn down, and decapitated. The last of a great royal line, she died bravely and royally.

This marriage of Henry's—great as had been his gratification in the early period of his intimacy with the youthful, beautiful, and artful Kate, and vast as had been her influence upon his mind, almost even tending towards a counter-revolution in religious matters—was to produce to him, almost ere its first year was ended, some of those evils and exactions which his alliance had invariably worked on others.

Tidings were brought to Cranmer of anti-connubial dissoluteness so enormous, of girlish infamy so hideous and disgusting on the part of the queen—with almost undoubted proofs of infidelity to the king—that he knew not what to do, seeing that to conceal, or reveal it, seemed almost dangerous. On advising, however, with the Chancellor and the Earl of Hertford, he disclosed his information to the king, who, though he at first utterly disbelieved it, and loudly expressed his disbelief, was soon forced to give full credit to the proofs which poured in upon him from every side. Her infamy, almost from her cradle upwards, was incredible and unconcealed. The king, the old, bloodthirsty, brutal tyrant, so deeply was his pride affected, remained a long time speechless, and then—was it for the first time since boyhood?—burst into tears of agony and fury uncontrollable. She died, as she deserved to die, on the scaffold; and her death, like her life, was bold, impudent, and shameless. With her, perished under the axe the assistant and companion of her crimes, the bad Lady Rochford, whose polluted evidence had been held good against Anne Boleyn and her own husband, the brother of her regal victim. And it is recorded, that men were now more convinced than ever of Anne's innocence, by this shameful catastrophe of the chief witness against her. With her died, also, Manhoe, Derham, and Colepepper, manifestly convicts of the crime; but many persons of high birth, unjustly attainted for misprision of treason in concealing the criminality of their kinswoman, among whom was the old Duchess of Norfolk, her grandmother, Lord William Howard, her uncle, and his wife, the Countess of Bridgewater, and nine others, were pardoned by the king, most unapt for pardon; which may be held full evidence that their sentence was not unjust only, but too flagrant for enforcement.

Henceforth, as if this injury to his pride had acted as the

sting of an arrow upon a gaunt, old, famished lion, goading him to fresh fury and carnage, he literally batted on the blood of the good, the noble, and the great. Neither church could now shield its professors from the stake, the scaffold, or the gallows; no age or reverence of virtue, no tenderness of sex or years, no gallantry or service of manhood could excite pity. The realm was a-blaze with man-consuming hecatombs, afloat with noble blood. Never before, never since, were there such times in England. Never again may there be such.

Yet not even this affront could restrain Henry's amorous propensities; and, in the year 1542, within two years (long space for him to tarry) after that infamous discovery, he married Catharine Parr, widow of the Earl of Neville, a woman no longer in the flower of youth, nor beauteous; but virtuous, and winning in her ways, and gifted with a shrewd tact to divine and anticipate the humors, and thence to anticipate the wishes, and avoid the anger of her tyrant.

Twice, in despite of all her caution, she was all but entangled in the toils which had been destructive to her. Once, when beautiful, brave Anne Ascue suffered herself to be dislocated on the rack, so that she could not stand at the stake, but was burned sitting in a chair, rather than implicate her queen in opinions which both held in common, touching the real presence; and again when, betrayed by the ardor and excitement of conversation, she contended too eagerly in argument in behalf of the reformed doctrines, against Henry himself, who, it must be remembered, was no reformer, nor protestant, but as strong a catholic as any; save that he wished himself to be both pope and king, and to concentrate under one office and one title the emoluments and powers of the two dignities.

The cleverness and womanly tact with which she extricated herself from that dilemma, by flattering Henry's love of power

and pride of argument, and by playing upon his foibles, must give us a high opinion of her talent and self-conduct, whatever it may do of her sincerity. In such a case, however, sincerity had been suicidal; and under such circumstances, if under any, to be insincere may be palliated, if not pardoned.

Suffice it, that she regained the confidence of the old, bloated, peevish tyrant's mind; heard him reproach the chancellor, who came with forty pursuivants to arrest her, as a "knave, fool, and beast;" and retained her hold upon his regard to the last, in spite of the ill offices of Gardiner, and others of her enemies and his sycophants.

But the end was now near at hand; for after within a few days' time having executed the Earl of Surrey, the most accomplished nobleman of the day, the patron of letters, the lover of the fair Geraldine—at once, like the prince of Denmark, the courtier, scholar, soldier—and condemned the father of his last victim, Norfolk, to the axe, he died in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and the thirty-eighth of his reign, the worst man and worst king that ever sat upon an English, perhaps upon an European throne, since the establishment of modern Europe.

He left a will, bequeathing the crown, first to Prince Edward, then to the two princesses, in the line of seniority; thereafter, failing issue, to the Marchioness of Dorset, the elder, and the Countess of Cumberland, the younger daughter of his second sister, the French queen; overlooking the posterity of his eldest sister, the Queen of Scots, on account, it is probable, of her religion—a will which bequeathed two reigns of bloodshed, and anarchy or tyranny to England; the evil effects of which were counteracted only by the iron will and manly wisdom of the greatest, if not the best, of English queens—his own lion-hearted daughter, by his first and most innocent victim—Elizabeth, who to the energy, the courage, the spirit, and same touch

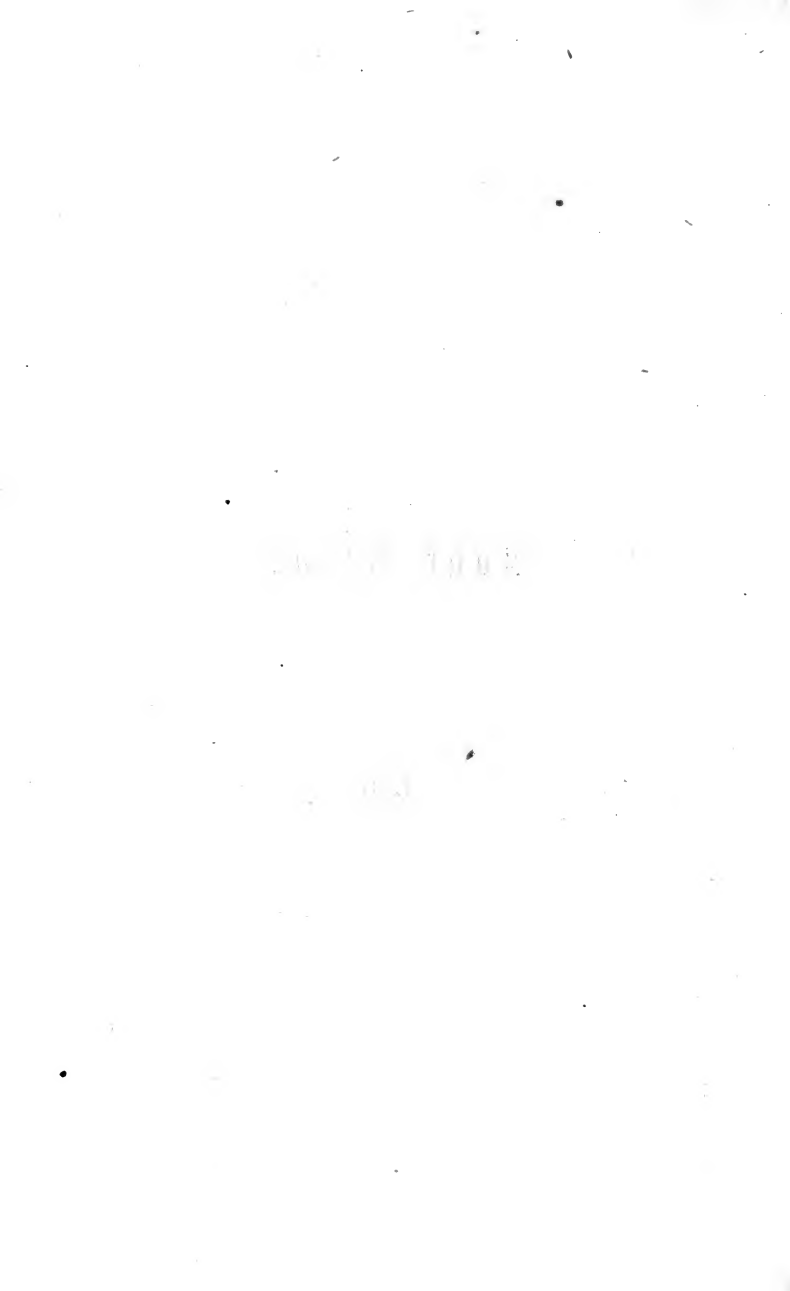
of the self-will of her father, added all the protestant feeling, and all the truthfulness, though none of the sweetness, of her mother, Anne Boleyn.

Verily! to look on these things, and others that occurred then, and thereafter, even the Christian might be apt to say, "Even on this earth there is retribution;" and to believe, with *Æschylus* of old, that bloodshed begetteth bloodshed, and that, of ancestral crime, crime is the offspring, unto the latest generation.



Anne Arne:

1546.



ANNE ASCUE.

THE fierce old tyrant, Henry VIII., was drawing towards his end; bloated, diseased, unwieldy, he had lost every vestige of those good looks which in his younger days had delighted the eyes—of that gallant and bold activity which had awakened the admiration—and of that bluff and jovial good humor which had won the affections—of his people. Like a gaunt old lion he became but the more fierce and cruel as his physical and mental powers decayed; arose despotically barbarous in the maintenance of his sovereign power, in proportion as he felt himself the less capable of maintaining it.

During his long and bloody reign, on one pretence or another, he had put to death by the block many of the brightest ornaments of his nobility; he had half decimated his people by the stake and the faggot, burning protestants alive for denying the “real presence,” and hanging papists for maintaining the supremacy of the Pope; he had sacrificed two wives to his jealousy or his satiety by a bloody death; he had, throughout his protracted sovereignty of seven and thirty years, showed himself the most vicious and inhuman monster that ever sat upon a throne: and yet—strange to say! owing to some personal qualities, such as daring bravery, profuse expenditure, a sort of wild

and capricious generosity, and his rough and ready accessibility to all his subjects, he had preserved to the last the regard and even the admiration of his subjects ; and is even now regarded traditionally by the lower orders of England, as a sort of *roi bonhomme*, under the sobriquet of Bluff King Hal—much as in the neighboring kingdom of France, the Fourth Henry of that realm has been with much more justice esteemed by his people.

In the latter years of his reign, his violent dogmatism on religious points and niceties of creed increased in a greater degree than any other of his strange and fearful inconsistencies. Since he had taken to holding public controversies in his own person against the wretches, who, in case of his failing to persuade and convert them, were doomed to the horrors of a fiery death, he had come to regard the acceptance of any creed different from his own as a personal insult to his understanding, and an overt act of treason against his sovereignty.

Since his mania for arguing on the subject of the real presence, and punishing those who disputed or denied it, increased hourly, it became actually a position of peril to be admitted to a few minutes' conversation with the polemical king, who was almost certain to entrap any person, whom he desired to confound, between the horns of a dilemma from which he could scarce hope to escape without incurring the perils of heresy or high treason.

The mental energy and physical activity of the king had now both failed ; he was not able to take any part in the athletic exercises which still continued down to his day—the last expiring sparks of feudalism and chivalry, or in those bold and stirring sports of the field, the stag hunt, cheered by the deep chorus of the full-mouthed Southron hounds, and the blast of the merry bugles—or the fierce brief gallop after the

long-winged falcon, striving with all its wings to outsoar the towering ascent of the grey heron hawk; in both of which pursuits he had taken so much delight, until the increasing corpulence of his huge bloated frame, and the growing infirmities of an advanced age, rendered it impossible for him to bestride a horse, much less to follow the hawk or the greyhound by mere fleetness of foot, as it had been his wont to do at a time when it was not the mere flattery of cringing courtiers which proclaimed him the best and boldest rider, the swiftest runner, and the strongest man, of all within the limits of his kingdom.

A stroll in the beautiful gardens of Hampton Court, or on the lordly terraces of Windsor, was now the longest excursions of which the king, once so energetical and restlessly active, was now capable; and in these, when he was not at the council table, fulminating the terrors of his deathful decrees on all who questioned his authority in sacred matters, or arguing in person with protestants who dared question the doctrines of the church of Rome, and with catholics who ventured to maintain the supremacy of the head of that church, he spent many hours daily, attended by his wife, the queen Catherine Parr, her bevy of fair ladies in waiting, and a body of his greater and more influential courtiers.

There has been much error in the estimate usually formed of the religious feelings or principles—for opinions or convictions I cannot bring myself to call them—of the eighth Henry, and of the extent and nature of the reformation which he set on foot in England. In the end, it is true that the changes which he set on foot did lead to the almost total extinction in England proper of the catholic faith, and to the establishment of what Henry would himself have called the Lutheran heresy. But nothing is more certain than that no end was farther than that from his desire or his contemplation. Infuriated in the

first instance by the steady and persevering opposition of Clement, who then occupied the papal chair, to his divorce from Catharine of Arragon, and contemplated marriage with the beautiful Anne Boleyn; and encouraged in his rebellious sentiments, by the unwillingness which had ever existed in the church as well as the laity in England—fostered, probably, in some degree, by its insular position—to submit implicitly to the absolute authority of a foreign head, Henry had absolutely rejected all obedience and allegiance, on his own part and on that of his subjects, to the head of the church at Rome, and had not only declared himself to be, but had obtained the acknowledgment of the church of England, that he indeed was the supreme and sole head of that church. But that church was, it must be remembered, not what we now understand as the church of England, but a purely and thoroughly Romish church, differing in no respect from the continental churches which professed the same faith, except in referring to the English monarch, instead of to an Italian priest, the supreme direction of its religion and care of its consciences.

It had its cardinals, its censorials, its altars and its incense, its confessionals and its sacraments, its canons and its creed, precisely as they existed in the Vatican: and it was no less jealous of its authority, and severe in the punishment of its heretics, than was the original foundation of St. Peter.

Henry, in fact, did not for an instant desire the abolition of Catholicism, for he was probably as sincere in his own profession of that faith, as a man of his fierce, impulsive, uncontrollable, and sensual nature could be sincere in any religion. Nor did he desire to destroy papacy itself—so far from it, that he desired ardently and strove earnestly to perpetuate it, in a divided form, making himself the Pope of England.

At an after period, he was compelled by the resistance of

the monastic bodies to secularize the possessions of the abbeys and monasteries throughout the land, and to drive out the monks and nuns from their time-honored residences, bestowing their broad acres and rich tithes on lay proprietors, or on the collegiate institutions of which he was a munificent founder and benefactor. Still, for the most part, the dispossessed churchmen were in some degree provided for by pensions and the like, while all the incumbents of church preferment, all the priests officiating at all churches, whether urban or rural, were, of course, of the old religion.

The reformers were everywhere regarded by kings and governments with more or less of political suspicion and distrust, as well as of religious abhorrence; and in fact it was not wonderful that such should be the case, for many of their earliest and wildest sects—such as the fanatical followers of Huss and John Zisca, and many of the Albigenses, Lollards, and Waldenses—held to opinions utterly subversive of all government both civil and social, affecting a levelling of all classes and conditions, and some of them were insisting on the abominable and disgusting tenets of Fourier and the modern socialists in regard to sexual relations. This reason would have been enough in itself to have steeled the heart and armed the hand of Henry against all the true and thorough-going reformers; as it was unquestionably in other days the cause of his great and manly-minded daughter's unrelenting persecution of the puritans and dissenters, whom she in truth punished as assailants of the prerogatives of her crown, not as schismatics beyond the pale of her church.

And indeed it is remarkable to this day, that the followers of the Romish church are invariably the most subordinate to discipline, and obedient to authority no less political than religious, and that in direct proportion as sects withdraw them-

selves farther and farther from that church so do they recede from the sentiment of loyalty, and from submission to political government. So that in almost every case the extreme dissenter will be found the extremest dissenter.

How far this may have weighed with Henry and prompted him to the cruel rigor with which he repressed the advance of protestant reform, is not so directly apparent as it is in the case of his daughter Elizabeth; but as Henry in no respect lacked political shrewdness or foresight, though he at times suffered his violent passions to prevail against the maxims of sound statesmanship, and as no king ever lived who was more jealous of his authority, there is no reason to doubt that he clearly foresaw the parallel and contemporaneous spread of liberal feelings in matters of church and state, of religious and political reform. But apart from this, he had the stern and obstinate veneration of the bigot for his own creed—a veneration enhanced in his proud and despotical mind by the consideration that it was his own—a consideration which led him to regard all dissent from it as an affront in some degree personal to himself.

Besides this, he prided himself on his learning and orthodoxy as a theologian, on his subtilty as a polemical casuist, and on his eloquence as a religious disputant; so that vanity, selfishness, bigotry, and interest all urged him to the infliction of the cruellest punishments on the wretches who differed from the tenets of the catholic church, and held opinions at variance to his own, especially on the question of the “real presence.”

So far, therefore, was Henry from being a religious reformer, or a favorer of protestantism, that the condition of the Lollard, the protestant reformer, or the heretical disbeliever in any of the peculiar doctrines of the Romish church, was infinitely

more perilous than that of the most violent and steadfast catholic who held out to extremity for the supremacy of the Pope. The latter might indeed be, and very probably was, arraigned for high treason, brought to trial, and beheaded for political criminality.

The former was very certain, in case of suspicion falling on him, to be incarcerated, interrogated before the council ; to be preached at and disputed with by the king in person, to be racked with unmerciful severity in order to extort from him confession concerning his own belief, and the persons of his co-religionists ; and lastly, if resolute in his belief and steadfast in refusing to abjure it, or, as it was the mode then to term it, obstinate in his contumacy, to be burned alive at the stake, as had been, and still were to be, so many martyrs to what they equally believed on both sides to be the cause of conscience and truth.

Henry indeed was scarcely second in his persecution of heretics, and his predilection for *autos-da-fê*, to the barbarous and bigoted Philip of Spain, though his butcherings and burnings were on a more limited and less general scale. Terrible, however, they were, and atrocious, and of them no worse or more sad example is recorded than in the instance of the beautiful and good Anne Ascue.

There was not at that day in all England, it was said, a lovelier being than Anne Ascue ; and being highly born and bred, closely connected with many of the chief ladies of the court, and among others with the queen Catherine herself, she became herself one of the brightest ornaments of that gay circle, so that the charms, which, had she been less prominently elevated before the eyes of men, would have only perhaps obtained for her the honor of being the "toast of a county," were now talked of far and wide, and herself followed and flattered by all the gallants of the capital, nay ; but by royalty itself.

Of the very highest stature to which a woman can attain without forfeiting one feminine attraction, Anne Ascue was at once slenderly and voluptuously formed, her perfectly symmetrical and rounded figure was full of every grace, whether in repose or in motion, and its soft and undulating outlines impressed the spectator with an idea of a perfect harmony between the proportions of the delicate and balanced figure, and the composed and happy soul which informed it. Her complexion was as fair as can be imagined, and her face so pale, that it was only at moments of the strongest emotion that even a transient flush was seen to color it; still there was nothing of unhealthy or livid pallor in the clear, life-like, and transparent huelessness of those pure cheeks, while the rich sentient lips, colored with the rose tints of the deep clove carnation, vouched for the ruddy hue of the warm current which flowed through her large blue veins. Her forehead was almost too high, too solid and intellectual for that of a woman, giving at first sight the idea of a character too grave and thoughtful, perhaps; too self-composed and tranquilly great to condescend to be moved by any of the small sublunary emotions, the passing pleasures, transient sorrows, the gentle affections, the daily cares, which make up the sun of this mortal life. And this character was even enhanced by the long straight dark brown eyebrows, curved into no regular symmetric curve of beauty, but crossing the broad marble forehead with a delicate yet decided line, full of pureness and character. One glance, however, of the deep black fringed azure eyes, when they were lifted to your face flashing with limpid merry lustre, and laughing in their own clear light—one smile from those red lips wreathing her cheeks and chin into a score of radiant dimples—you could not doubt that you saw in Anne Ascue,

A spirit, yet a woman too;
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death;]
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command,
And yet a spirit still, and bright,
With something of an angel light.

Such indeed she was in disposition, and neither care nor education had been spared in order to render her acquired gifts equal to and worthy of her natural endowments. She was not only accomplished—as we use the word of our ladies in this latter day—in the knowledge and familiar use of modern tongues, a beautiful and almost inspired musician, a chaste and graceful dancer, a fearless and elegant equestrian, but she was learned in the sense in which we speak of men, and of but few men, too, of this age and country—though in the sixteenth century it was by far less rare than it is in the nineteenth, to find the blithest and most radiant ladies reading the immortal bards of old in their original classic tongues—and Anna could read not only Plato and the tragedians in their own dialect, redolent of all the attic honey of Hymettus, but could follow the sages and prophets of the Old Testament through the grand metaphors and magnificent hyperboles, which, a part and parcel of all

oriental languages, belong to none more thoroughly than to the noble and sonorous Hebrew.

Better for her, however, had it been, in this world at least, had her studies been confined to the light melodies of Southern bards; had the smooth and effeminate Italian, the gay and gentle Provençal, or the statelier Spanish tongues been her highest acquisition. Better had it been for her, had her companions with whom she loved to converse, now mirthfully, now gravely and on deeper lore, been the gay gallants of the court, rather than the deep designing churchmen, the wily Romish priests and cardinals, who, ever fearful of seeing yet more of their power escaping from their clutch, were making the most desperate efforts to establish catholicism on the broadest base; and for that end to detect, discover, or, if needs must be, to make heretics in the highest places, for the purpose of publicly degrading, and as publicly destroying them. At this moment, the catholics were extremely powerful at court, Wriothesley, the chancellor, who had succeeded Audley, and was deeply attached to the Romish party, never ceasing to inflame the king, on all occasions, in season and out of season, against all heretics and reformers, and constantly exacerbating his rancor against them, by representing the dangers which he was incurring, not only to the safety of his realm, but to the salvation of his immortal soul, by overlooking in the least degree the obstinate contumacy of these levellers of all social right, and subverters of all authority, human or divine.

Nor did the jealousy of the cruel, old, suspicious tyrant, whose habitual peevishness was now increased by illness, need any farther stimulus. As he became aware that his own latter day was approaching, it really seemed as if he feared that he should be deprived of the privilege of shedding a due quantity of blood before his own demise; as if he dreaded that any victim should

escape his rancor. His own queen Catharine, whose sweet, gentle temper, moderate and circumspect life, united to an extraordinary degree of tact, talent, and insight into her husband's character, had enabled her to retain his esteem and affections for so many years, now fell under his suspicions. It was his favorite habit to converse on points of theology; and Catharine, whose good sense enabled her to converse well on all subjects, fell in some degree into the snare, and being secretly inclined to the doctrines of the reformers, suffered him to discover too much of her mind on the subject. Henry consulted Gardiner and Wriothesly, and both of them encouraging, nay, urging him to extreme measures, he ordered articles of impeachment to be drawn against her. Her fate was quivering in the balance; a hair would have turned the scales. For though she, with rare tact and ingenuity, represented that in her conversations with the king she had only feigned to differ from him, in order to have the pleasure of being conquered by his eloquence, and instructed by his superior erudition, the old savage still doubted; and on one occasion is said to have exclaimed, in reply to her defence—"Not so! by St. Mary! Not so! you are now become a doctor, Kate, and better fitted to give than receive instruction." Had he continued in that mood many hours, the head of Catharine Parr had rolled on the same scaffold with that of the gentle Anna Boleyn, that of the shameless Catharine Howard; she was saved, but saved only by vicarious blood—by the agonies and death of a most pure and spotless victim.

For at this time charges were brought against Anne Ascue, the friend and maid of honor of the queen, that she dogmatized in secret on the most delicate questions of doctrine, and more especially that she denied the "real presence."

At first she openly avowed her opinions, which scarcely, it would seem, amounted to such a degree of dissent as the Inqui-

sition itself would pronounce heresy. Henry, however, was furious that a woman's weakness should dare to dispute on points of reason with his manly understanding, and resolved that no indulgence should be shown to her; and Henry's ministers, hopeful that if put to the rack she would accuse other great ladies, and perhaps the queen herself, whose friend and confidante she was known to be, determined that whatever was to be the end, she should not escape the horrors of the question.

She was prevailed upon indeed by Bonner to make a seeming recantation, but it was either in reality insufficient, or it was determined to consider none that she could make as satisfactory. She was cast into prison, where she spent her time in fortifying her mind by prayers and religious exercises to endure the horrible extremities which, as she now perceived, too certainly awaited her. She even wrote to the king, and told him "that as to the Lord's supper, she believed as much as Christ himself had said of it, and as much of his divine doctrine as the church itself required." Still, as she refused her assent to Henry's polemical explanations and interpositions of authority, she was sentenced, as she had expected, to be burned alive at the stake as an heretic.

But even this extremity failed to shake her; she prayed fervently for power from heaven to endure her agonies with equanimity, and for pardon upon those who for no cause had consigned her to a fate so barbarous.

But even the little remnant of her life was not to be permitted to elapse without an aggravation of cruelty and horrors. Wriothesly, the chancellor, was sent to interrogate her, as to the religious tenets of the great ladies in correspondence with her, and above all of the queen herself—but Anne, although she knew all, and was promised a free pardon if she would make disclosures, endured the extremity of the rack even

until all the joints of her body were entirely dislocated, in profound and resolute silence. Then, horror of horrors ! when she would make no confession, the chancellor commanded and reiterated his commands, to increase the tension of the rack yet further, and when the lieutenant of the Tower still refused, that truculent minister put his own hand to the wheel, and almost tore her body in twain. Still no confession followed ; and reluctantly they left her for execution on the morrow.

And now the last day had arrived ; the fatal morn had broken in the east, and Anne awoke from the disturbed and fitful slumbers which had not sufficed to render her unconscious of the tortures which she endured throughout every portion of her rent and dislocated frame—awoke only to the knowledge that these tortures were to be ended, within a few short hours, by a death the most agonizing that the human imagination can conceive, or human fortitude endure.

Serene and quiet to the last, she baffled all the malice of her enemies by her gentle and uncomplaining fortitude, and by the unexampled constancy with which she had borne all agonies of the rack without a word of confession, by the saint-like tranquillity with which she looked forward to her release through the medium of the last anguish.

The fatal moment arrived, and, unable to stand erect, even when chained to the stake, so thoroughly wrenched asunder were all her joints, she was carried in a chair to the stake, and so endured her appalling doom.

Three others perished with her for the same crime, and by the same awful death—Nicholas Bellerian, a priest, and two others of humbler station, but all with the same constancy, all with the same confidence of receiving the reward of martyrdom in a crown of everlasting and immortal glory.

One trial more awaited them—for when they were already

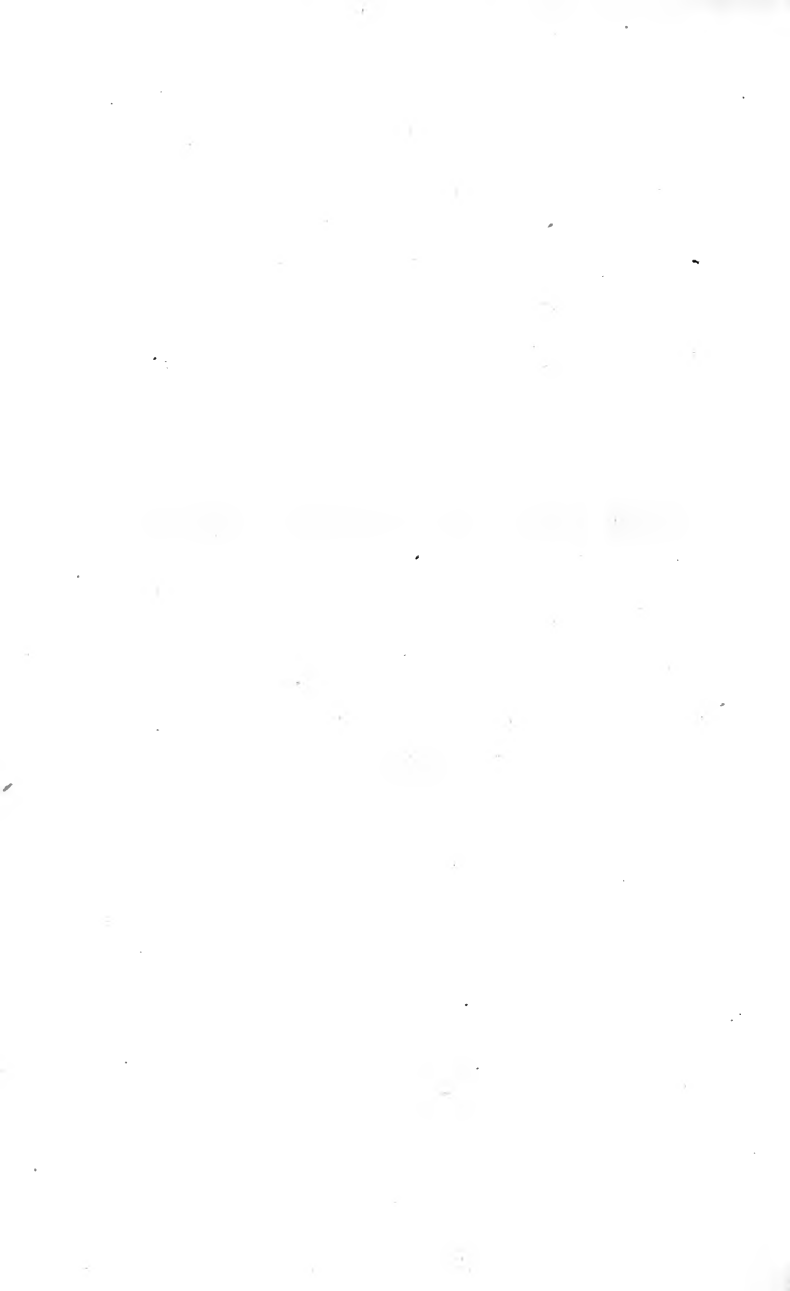
bound to the stake ; with the torches already kindled around them, a free pardon was offered to them on condition of their recantation. But not one of the number faltered, or flinched from the horrid ordeal. Silent and serene they looked on as the executioners kindled the pile which was to consume them, and without a groan or shriek they endured that last worst torment. The flames soared up to the abhorrent and indignant heavens, and bore upwards on their raging volumes four souls, acceptable to their Creator.

Never was there a more unjust or pitiable doom, never a nobler or more constant example of courage in a holy cause of fidelity in the last extremity, than was seen in the fate, and shown in the conduct of young, beautiful, and true Anne Ascue.

She died for her religion and her queen ; but the memory of her shall be green and fresh for ever in the hearts of men, when that of the mistress to save whom she perished shall be forgotten, and that of the cruel bigot who condemned her shall be detested in all lands, and through all ages. Honor eternal to Anne Ascue !

Jane Grey and Guilford Dudley.

1554.



JANE GREY AND GUILFORD DUDLEY.

THERE was a pleasant summer parlor in an old Elizabethan mansion, as we are wont nowadays to call the buildings of the era of the Tudors, although many were built long before the time of that great princess, and this of which I speak among the rest—overlooking from its oriel windows a wide stretch of park and chase, varied by dells and dingly hollows, and interspersed with clumps and groves of magnificent timber trees, all falling away in a long, gentle descent to the southwestward, so that the eye could range for miles over the open country, until it rested, far on the horizon's verge, on one of the stateliest of English rivers, and, yet beyond that, on an extensive mass of forest, empurpled now by the haze of distance and near approaching sunset.

It was a pleasant parlor, hung with rich tapestries of green, inwrought with scenes of the chase, deer in full cry, and hounds in hot pursuit, foresters winding their bugles with puffed cheeks or spearing mighty boars, nobles with falcons on their fists, and gentle demoiselles reining their jennets of Castile or Andalusia, and all the pride and pomp of the mimicry of warfare. The level sunbeams, streaming in through the latticed casements, filled the whole apartment with misty golden lustre, played lovingly on the books and ornaments which crowded the great

central table, and kindled into warmer hues the dark wainscoting of the carved ceiling, the huge sculptured mantel-piece, and the embossed doorways; but it fell upon nothing—where all was beautiful and rare—so rare or beauteous as the young girl, for she was scarcely woman yet, who sat on the cushioned window-seat of that oriel window, with the sunset rays playing about her light brown hair, her delicate and pensive features, and her slender though symmetrical form, like a lambent glory. She was reading in a huge velvet-covered, brass-clasped folio, which lay on a desk before her, and that so intently that she appeared to take no note of the gay sights and exciting sounds which, all that livelong day, had been sweeping past the windows, within reach of her abstracted eyes, and ringing in her ears unheeded. For the chase was sport without, gayer and more enlivening than it was depicted within; bloodhounds were baying until the deep woods rebellowed their harmonious discords; bugles were winded far and near; coursers were prancing and plumes waving, and ladies cantering across the lily leas, eager to mark the towering goshawk swoop on the soaring heron.

Yet from noon till it was now nearly night had that fair girl sat there engrossed in her studies, though friends and kinsmen—and one more dear, alas! than friend or kinsman—was chasing down the sun in the gay sport; and never once had she upraised those deep blue eyes from those quaintly charactered vellum pages, although his charger had curveted within sight, and his view-holloa swelled the breeze within hearing.

Suddenly the door opened, still unheard by the young student, who read on, unconscious that she had a spectator present at her studies. It was a tall, spare, dark-featured man, of sixty years or over, with a thick grizzled beard falling down square-cut on his breast, and wearing the trencher cap and flow-

ing black robes which were then, as now, the distinctive garb of the universities. His features, naturally grave, not stern, relaxed into a placid and benevolent smile, and an unbidden tear-drop sparkled, he knew not why, in his heavy lashes.

"Ha! gentle lady," he said, advancing slowly towards her, "indeed you are an earnest and right studious student for one of such years as most men hold better befitted to gay and mirthful pastime; what be thy studies, my fair daughter, this bright evening, when the hunt is up, and all the world, saving you only, are afield and merry?"

"Oh, Master Roger Ascham," exclaimed the girl, arising with a bright smile to greet her friend, the preceptor of the Lady Elizabeth of England—"Oh, Master Roger Ascham, you have surprised me. But, indeed, Plato is my most choice favorite, and his sweet eloquence and all persuading wisdom delight me far beyond all pleasures they can reap from all their sport and gaiety."

"Yet Dudley is among them, daughter," replied the old man with a quiet smile.

"Ah! Master Ascham!" answered the girl, with a blush arising for a moment to her fair cheeks and brow, lifting her finger in half playful reproof; and then she added with a smile, "but Guilford Dudley is not Plato, father; and though his company is very pleasant, I doubt if from his converse I should reap so much good, excellent though it be and gentle, as from this wondrous Phædon."

"You are wise, daughter, excellent wise and good, for one of your years, so gay of wont, and thoughtless," replied the old man, with something of a sigh breathed from a smiling lip; for the aged wise are apt to associate, even the least superstitious of them, something, I know not what, of premature decay with

early wisdom. "It is my fervent prayer that your maturity be no less happy than your youth is promising."

"Why should it not be happy, father!" she replied. "I am most happy now. All are so kind and affectionate to me; and then——"

"And then what, fair daughter?"

Again the faint blush rose to her cheek for an instant; but she answered in an unfaltering and clear tone of her silver voice—"I was thinking of *him*, Master Ascham." She spoke of her youthful lord, to whom she had been so lately wedded. "My life, hitherto, has been but one long, long spring day of unmixed sweetness, without one cloud to overshadow it, one shower to drown its rosebuds."

"God grant, in his goodness," said the old man solemnly, "that your life henceforth, my sweet daughter, may advance into the blush and flower of perfect summer, and decline, peaceful as an autumn sunset, dying away in a flood of heavenly glory."

"Amen! good Master Ascham. But you seem sad to-night; it is not, I trust, that you have any cause for melancholy?"

"It is not melancholy; it is only thought, my daughter; the old are wont to grow more thoughtful, as they have the less hold on earth, and the more hope, we will trust, of heaven. But of a truth—for why should I deceive you?—I have heard tidings that in some sort disquiet me; that make me thoughtful, yet glad withal at finding you so studious and so wise; that make me hope you will know how to hold fast of your philosophy."

"What are your tidings, father?" she inquired timidly, yet eagerly withal—for there was something in his manner that almost alarmed her, while at the same time it excited all her woman's wonder.

"The King is dead, Jane."

“Dead! Gentle Edward dead! My excellent good cousin dead! So virtuous, so wise for his youth; so young for his wisdom! Oh, father, but this is very, very sad. Oh, father, I have lost a friend.”

“Pray God, you ne’er may feel the loss of one.”

But she scarce heard his words, for, her short and broken ejaculations ended, she had bowed her gentle head upon her knees, and was weeping silently, with the big heavy tears trickling through the slender fingers in which her face was buried; and while she wept, the kind grave tutor left the apartment, to bear the sad news of her half brother’s death to his own immediate charge, the Princess Elizabeth, thereafter the great woman-king of England; and when she raised her eyes again, the Lady Jane Grey was alone with her sorrow.

Yes, fair and gentle reader—if any of the fair and gentle deign to lend an ear to a too sad and too true tale—she, whom you have seen seeking amusement while her gay comrades were rejoicing in their festive sports of old, not in the pages of the last new novel, but in the grand original of the old Greek philosopher, was not less fair than thou, and not less youthful; of nobler birth than thine, for hers was *royal*; like thee, the cynosure of all eyes, the beloved of all beholders; and yet she read Plato in the original Greek, rose at six in the morning, and went to rest not long after the birds flew to their roosts; and of a certainty would have blushed deeper than she ever did blush, had she beheld revealed the modern mysteries of the fashionable waltz, or the more fashionable Redowa polka. She was Jane Grey, at that instant, by the letters patent of King Edward, granted on his death-bed, Queen of England. Alas! for her, the beautiful, the innocent, the young—forced by the rude ambition of her husband’s kinsmen from the sweet privacies, to her so lovely and delicious, into the thorny seat of Eng-

land's royalty. Yes! though she knew it not, nor surely wished it, even at that hour, while she was weeping the untimely death of her young cousin, Jane Grey was England's queen.

It must be remembered in this place that Henry VIII., shortly before his death, declared his only son his successor, under the title of Edward VI., under the government of a council, one of whom was Dudley, Viscount Lisle, the Admiral of England, agreeably to the destination of Parliament. After Edward and his heirs, the Lady Mary was named first, and the Lady Elizabeth second, in order of succession, with this proviso, that if either should marry without the consent of the council, she should forfeit the crown for herself and her posterity. Failing the heirs of his own body, he passed over the heirs of his eldest sister, the Queen of Scots, in accordance with an act of parliament, and settled the succession on Frances Brandon, Marchioness of Dorset, eldest daughter of his second sister the French queen, and, after her, on Eleanor, Countess of Cumberland, her second daughter. But he subjoined that, after these, the crown should descend to the lawful heirs, thus leaving it open to a question, and thence to a contest, whether he meant thereby entirely to exclude the Scottish line, who were actually the next heirs before, not after, the house of Suffolk.

By a succession of events, intrigues, and acts of violence and iniquity, which do not of right belong to this sketch, Dudley, Viscount Lisle, the son of that Dudley who, with Sir Richard Empson, was executed in the first year of Henry VIII. for extortion during the reign of his father, afterwards created Earl of Warwick, gradually undermined and finally overthrew the protector, Somerset, who ultimately perished on the scaffold, himself succeeding to his dignity and office under the title of Duke of Northumberland. That title he obtained, together

with all the great estates of the Percy family in the north, which was still the most warlike part of England, by grant from the young king; as the late Earl of Northumberland having died without issue, and his brother, Sir Thomas Percy, having been attainted for his share in the Yorkshire insurrection during the reign of Henry, the title was now extinct, and the lands were vested in the crown. This done he proceeded, being a man of extraordinary capacity and ability, both for peace and war, and of ambition not inferior to his parts, on his course of aggrandizement, by persuading the new Duke and Duchess of Suffolk to give their daughter, the Lady Jane Grey, who was the next of kin, and heiress to the Marchioness of Dorset, in marriage to his fourth son, the Lord Dudley Guilford. Thereafter he negotiated a marriage, whereby to strengthen himself by further great alliance, between Catharine Grey, Jane's younger sister, and Lord Herbert, eldest son of the Earl of Pembroke, giving at the same time his own daughter in marriage to Lord Hastings, eldest son of the Earl of Huntingdon. These marriages being celebrated with extraordinary pomp and splendor, while the young king was languishing and like to die, moved extreme indignation among the people at large, who hated Northumberland in proportion as they had loved the regent, Somerset, whom he had caused to be put to death, as well as for his intolerable haughtiness and overbearing pride.

About this time Edward VI., a prince of the most amiable disposition, and by no means without parts, whose only fault was something of intolerance towards the Catholics, and an overleaning to ultra Protestants or puritanic doctrines, fell ill, being seized with a cough which, yielding to neither regimen nor medicines, speedily degenerated into consumption.

So soon as this fact came to the knowledge of Northumberland, he applied himself forthwith to the execution of his plans

with renewed vigor. He took care that none but his own creatures should be about the person of the king, and, paying him constant visits, under pretence of great solicitude for his health, he found it easy to work upon his religious feelings, and to create much alarm in his mind concerning the safety of the Protestant Church, should so bigoted a Catholic as the Lady Mary was known to be succeed to the throne of England.

Mary, he represented, was, moreover, illegitimate, her mother's marriage having been pronounced incestuous and null. This he was easily induced to believe in, and he readily acquiesced in depriving her of her rights in succession: but it was far more difficult to bring him to pass over the Lady Elizabeth, to whom he was tenderly and sincerely attached, and against whom no such cause of exclusion existed, she being, no less than himself, a sincere, though scarcely zealous, Protestant.

Means were at length found, however, by which to convince him that both sisters having been alike pronounced by act of Parliament illegitimate, it was not possible to exclude the one to the preference of the other on that plea, since the act of illegitimacy was a bar against both in the same degree, nor could be valid in the one case and void in the other. On these grounds letters patent were granted by the king, setting aside both his sisters of the half blood as illegitimate, and settling the succession on the Lady Jane and the heirs of her body after his demise.

Although the council, who were all creatures of Northumberland, easily assented to this iniquitous proceeding, it was not without great difficulty, nor until a special commission was passed by the king and council commanding them to do so, and a free pardon granted them in case they should incur offence by their compliance, that the judges would draw a new patent of settlement of the crown. When the patent was

brought to the chancellor, the Bishop of Ely, he refused peremptorily to affix the great seal thereunto, unless it should be previously signed by all the judges ; and though the others finally assented, after much violence and menace from Northumberland, Sir James Hales, though a zealous protestant, could not be brought to do so. In like manner, when the privy councillors were called upon to sign, Cranmer resisted long, and at last yielded only to the earnest and pathetic entreaties of the youthful king.

Thus, in spite of the late king's will ; in spite of act of parliament ; in spite of the laws fundamental of the land ; against the acknowledged order of hereditary succession ; against all rule and precedent, the two daughters of the late king, Mary and Elizabeth, were arbitrarily and illegally set aside, and the crown settled on the heirs of the Duchess of Suffolk ; for she herself, though living, waived the perilous dignity in favor of her daughters, the ladies Jane and Catharine Grey, and their posterity.

And thus, although neither of them knew it then, when Roger Ascham left her presence, the Lady Jane was *de facto* queen of England.

What follows is sad history. On the following morning, after a fruitless effort to entrap the princesses Mary and Elizabeth, in which, had he succeeded, to judge of the unscrupulous nature and proceedings of this bold bad man, their tenure even of the barren right of succession would have been but of short duration, Northumberland waited on the Lady Jane, accompanied by the Duke of Suffolk, the Earl of Pembroke, and others of their partisans, and tendered to her their allegiance with all the respect and honor due to a sovereign prince.

It was with equal grief and astonishment that the amiable

and lovely girl learned, for the first time, the plots which had been entered into, and that too successfully, in her behalf.

Of the same age with Edward, she had been his friend, his companion, and his fellow student; had acquired with him, and even more than he, a perfect and familiar acquaintance with the Greek and Roman classics, reading them fluently in the original, and also with the modern languages, in several of which she conversed as easily as in the vernacular. Her favorite amusement was the pursuit of elegant and graceful letters; her preferred mode of life was retirement—with her lord, to whom she had given not her hand only, but her whole heart, with all its rich store of delicate and feminine attachments—in some sequestered rural residence, where they might live alone with nature and their books,

“The world forgetting, of the world forgot.”

To such a mind, rarely endowed with talents and attainments, and possessed wholly by such sentiments and tastes, it needs not to say that the splendid glare of courts, the perilous ways of ambition, and the thorns which to a proverb lurk within the circle of the diadem, offered no pleasure, no allurements.

Her affection, moreover, to the late king, and her regard for the Princess Elizabeth, led her to consider even a lawful occupation of the throne as an act of ingratitude, if not treason.

She wept, when the crown was offered to her, even more bitterly than she had wept on hearing of the death of Edward; for those were tears of sorrow and sisterly affection—these were in some sort tears of remorse, in some sort of sad and dark foreboding. She argued earnestly, though gently—for all her character was of gentleness—against her own elevation to the perilous height of royalty. She pleaded the superior right of the two princesses to the crown; expressed her conviction of the

danger of embarking on an enterprise so criminal and dangerous ; and at length, when urged to the point, decidedly refused to accept the proffered honor. In vain Northumberland argued and insisted ; nay, he almost threatened, yet could he not prevail ; nor was it until the entreaties and caresses of her young husband, whose ambition, it would seem, was dazzled by the prospect of the crown matrimonial, that she, at length, reluctantly and tearfully, and with many hesitations and forebodings, consented to ascend that fatal eminence.

“ It was then usual,” says Hume, “ for the kings of England, after their accession, to pass the first days in the Tower ; and Northumberland immediately conducted thither the new sovereign. All the councillors were obliged to attend her to that fortress ; and by this means became, in reality, prisoners in the hands of Northumberland, whose will they were necessitated to obey. Orders were given by the council to proclaim Jane throughout the kingdom ; but these orders were executed only in London, and the neighborhood. No applause followed ; the people heard the proclamation with silence and concern ; some even expressed their scorn and contempt.”

Of such a commencement it required no prophet's eye to discern the disastrous conclusion. The fact appears to have been, that as yet the mass of the people comparatively cared but little about religious matters ; that the respect and singular affection for Henry VIII., which had always dwelt in the popular breast, was by no means extinguished ; and that the hatred against the Dudleys, on account of the execution of the Seymours, was still paramount. Moreover, although the masses were certainly disposed to regard the marriage between Henry VIII. and Catharine of Aragon as unlawful, they were by no means prepared to consider the issue of that marriage illegitimate, seeing that it had been entered into under the authority

of the church, and without suspicion of wrong by the parties. On all sides, therefore, the gentry and nobility of Suffolk, with their servants and retainers, flocked to the standard of Mary in Suffolk, whither she had fled for refuge on the first intelligence of the conspiracy. Ere long, the Earl of Huntingdon, who had been sent by the council to make levies for the Lady Jane in Buckinghamshire, carried his forces over to Mary; while the very fleet which Northumberland dispatched to cruise on the coast of Suffolk, deserting him, sailed into Yarmouth, and declared for the queen *de jure*.

Northumberland himself, when, after in the first instance sending out Suffolk to command the forces, doubting his capacity to lead them, he marched forth in person, observed the supineness, if not the disaffection of the people, and commented on it to the Lord Grey: "Many," he said, "come out to look upon us; but I find not one who cries 'God speed you!'"

His forebodings were right speedily proved true; for, finding himself unequal to cope with Mary in the field, and sending in to the councillors for reinforcements, those gentlemen, with Pembroke at their head, obtaining egress from the Tower, as if to obey their orders, at once shook off and denounced his usurped power, unsheathed their swords for Mary Tudor, and proclaimed her in the midst of great applause from the people.

Suffolk, who commanded in the Tower for the Lady Jane, at once laid down his arms, and gave up the keys; while the messengers who were sent off with orders to command Northumberland to forbear further resistance, which must perforce be fruitless, found that he had already disbanded his followers, and proclaimed Queen Mary, although too late to save his head. Throughout the country, as Mary approached the metropolis, she was greeted with general, almost unanimous loyalty; and before entering the gates was joined by her sister Elizabeth, at

the head of a thousand horse, which she had raised to act against the usurper ; thus giving evidence in her girlhood of what she would do in after years for the protection of her throne, and her own country's freedom, in a more desperate struggle and against a far mightier foe.

All the conspirators and abettors in this desperate act of treason were of course arrested, brought to trial, and sentenced ; and among them, innocent and unhappy children—mere tools and victims of ambitious traitors, Jane Grey and Guilford Dudley. In the commencement of her reign, however, Mary affected, if she were not really inclined to, a clemency, which, it is very certain, nothing in her latter career showed to be natural or congenial to her hard, cold, cruel nature.

None suffered, at that time, save those whom no modern casuistry or apologetic clemency could deny to be justly slain—Northumberland, the arch mover and executor of the plot, and his subordinates, Sir Thomas Palmer and Sir John Gates. No more of slaughter, at this time, was the consequence of this ill-timed and absurd, yet at the same time most iniquitous and desperate, conspiracy.

Dudley and the Lady Jane, being neither of them as yet seventeen, and being evidently and before all eyes guiltless, so far as intent of all complicity in the treason, it would not have been politic in any case to have them brought to the scaffold. Their youth, their innocence, their beauty, alike conciliated the people in their favor, and to have brought them to judgment then would probably have been to jeopard all the vantage-ground won, and perhaps to risk a second outbreak in the name of Jane Grey.

But Mary knew not how to pardon ; and, though they were not put to death, they were committed to the Tower, that “den of drunkards with the blood of princes”—that dungeon-keep,

wherein so many good, so many wise, so many noble, and so many great of the sons of men, had been immured for years, to glut the scaffold with their gore.

How they passed the weary months which ensued is covered with a gloom impalpable, inscrutable, though there is too much reason to believe that they were not allowed even the poor consolation of sharing the sorrows which would have been alleviated by participation.

But, like all other human things, those months came to an end, and brought to an end likewise the sorrows of that bright and fair young couple.

On the publication of the articles of marriage between Mary of England and Philip of Spain, a violent insurrection broke out in several parts of England, and had any foreign prince supported the insurgents with his countenance, it is probable that she would have lost her kingdom. As it was, although for a short time Mary was all but overtaken and surprised by her rebels, it was in the end suppressed with great ease, and avenged by merciless and bloody executions. For Mary, now for the first time giving free scope to her natural disposition, revelled in blood and cruelty. Could she by any means have effected it, she would have sent her sister Elizabeth to the scaffold; but, as she was expressly acquitted by the dying declaration of Wyatt, the chief of the insurgents, she concentrated her bloody rage on the heads of Jane and Dudley. No further trial was needed, the old sentence being still on record and in force. Warning was sent to the Lady Jane that she must now prepare for death, a fate which she had long expected tacitly, and which—in the consciousness of innocence and the weariness of life—she perhaps desired as a boon, rather than dreaded as a penalty. To the arguments of the Catholic divines with which Mary's zeal assailed her last moments—and I believe this

zeal may be regarded as sincere, not simulated—she replied firmly and consistently in defence of her own religion; and after this she wrote a letter to her sister in the Greek tongue, encouraging her to hold fast to her faith in every trial, and to maintain, in every fortune, a like steady perseverance.

When the day of her execution arrived, her husband sent to request a parting interview, which she declined, informing him that the tenderness of their parting would overcome the fortitude of both; while their separation would be but for a moment.

She even stood at her window and watched to see him led forth to execution, when she waved to him a parting token, and then awaited calmly the return of the cart with Guilford's headless body; for, though it had been at first intended that both should suffer together on one scaffold on Tower Hill, it was deemed prudent to avoid the risk of stimulating the compassion of the people for their innocence, and youth, and beauty, into fury for their unmerited judicial murder, and it was resolved that they should suffer singly within the precincts of that bloody building.

When his body was brought back, and her turn had come, she expressed herself but the more strengthened by the reports of the constancy with which he had met his doom, and descended the dark stairway which led, not metaphorically, to the grave, not bravely but cheerfully, as though she longed to join him who had gone before on the dark path which leads to life immortal, whether for weal or woe eternal.

To the constable of the Tower, who asked her for "some small present which he might preserve as an everlasting remembrance," she gave her table-book, containing the last words she should ever write—three sentences in Greek, Latin, and English, which she had just inscribed therein on seeing the headless corpse of her loved lord.

When she reached the scaffold, she delivered a short speech, taking the whole blame on herself, without one word of reproach or complaint against the needless cruelty of her doom; admitting that she had erred against the laws of her land, and declaring that she was willing to make satisfaction to them, but averring that she had sinned not in grasping too greedily the crown, but in not refusing it more steadfastly. Filial obedience and reverence to her parents, she said, acting on youth and ignorance, and by no means ambition, had brought her to this pass. And she concluded by stating that she hoped the story of her fate might prove useful to the world, by proving that innocence itself is no excuse for misdeeds, if they be injurious to the commonwealth. Then, causing herself to be disrobed by her women, she submitted herself with a serene countenance to the blow of the executioner.

She died, yet lives for ever—lives in the memories and affections of her countrymen—lives, doubtless, among the saints of heaven in everlasting glory: for, if there was ever yet a woman who was almost a saint, while on this earth, that woman was Jane Grey.

Elizabeth Tudor & Mary Stuart,

1568.



ELIZABETH TUDOR AND MARY STUART.

THE greatest and most fortunate of queens—the loveliest and most hapless of women. They might have been friends and sisters, as they were sister queens of one fair island, then, for the last time, divided; fortune and fate, and that worst curse of sovereigns as of nations, religious dissension, rendered them enemies; and, as in such case ever must be, the weaker of the two was shipwrecked in the strife. They were, moreover, nearly akin; and this, which should have been a source of amity and good will, was, on the contrary, the cause of rivalry, hostility, suspicion, and finally of the death of one, and of a dark blot on the escutcheon of the other.

Elizabeth, the second daughter of the most arbitrary and absolute king who ever sat upon the throne of England, Henry VIII., and of his favorite wife, who was the people's favorite also, ascended the throne of England—after the successive deaths of her brother Edward VI., a weak minor, and her elder sister Mary, a hard-hearted bigot, whose memory is to this day a reproach to England and accursed of her people—amidst the general acclamations and sincere delight of all classes. Her accession had been long looked forward to as the oil that was to assuage the troubled sea of contending factions, the sweet balm that was to heal the wounds of persecution. She found a peo-

ple nearly, if not absolutely, united; for the barbarities of Mary, while they had but increased the zeal, and added the prestige of martyrdom to the cause of the protestants, had alienated the moderate catholics; and, indeed, disgusted all classes of Englishmen, with whom religious toleration, and even indifference, had been a more usual phase of the public sentiment than anything leaning towards cruelty or coercion. Thus, both religious parties greeted her advent to the throne, and that sincerely; for the catholics apprehended, as a body, no severe retaliation from the hands of a princess known to be moderate and politic, rather than splenetic and rash; and the protestants were too happy at obtaining quiet, peace, and toleration, to desire in their turn to become persecutors. Compassion, moreover, was a further sentiment in her favor; for she had conducted herself with rare prudence during her sister's reign; and the imminent and instant peril in which she lived until Mary's death had rendered her an object of general sympathy, even among the catholic party.

She came to the throne at the age of twenty-six years, the whole of which time she had passed in a subordinate, always humiliating, and often dangerous, position. No adulation of courtiers, no loud lip-loyalty of shouting thousands, had fostered her youthful mind's worst passions. Neglected, scorned as illegitimate, imperilled as heretic, she had lived with her studies, had communed with herself and the world of the mighty dead, more than with modern men or manners. Her tutor had been the famous Roger Ascham; and, although the education which he bestowed upon her was, of a surety, what we should now deem better suited for the male than for the female sex, it cannot be denied that it was such as befitted one who was to fill the place of a king in England, and to contend against the

greatest powers and and princes of Europe for her own crown and her country's liberties.

Already, when she climbed the steps of that proud throne, had she learned one mighty lesson, had proved herself capable of one grand triumph : *major adversis** she had shown herself already ; the harder task lay yet behind, to exhibit herself, as so few have done of mortals, *par secundis*.†

In person she was tall, well formed, and majestic rather than graceful in carriage and demeanor ; her features, which it were impossible to call handsome, were still striking, from the great intelligence and power of mind which they evinced ; and although her hair was, in truth, of that hue which men call red, there were not wanting poets—according to Homer, they should have been gods—to celebrate it in immortal verse as golden. To conclude, it may be said that Elizabeth, even as a private woman, would probably, in any society, have attracted attention by the graces of her person only ; although, assuredly, no one in his senses would have dreamed of calling her beautiful, or of choosing her as his wife for her personal or mental loveliness. Her character is a strange one ; and one especially, that cannot be summed up in a sentence. In order to attempt to do so, I must be paradoxical, and assert that, in her virtues she was purely masculine, and feminine only in her vices. Of male virtues she lacked not one ; of female virtues she scarce possessed any. She had courage, fortitude, patience, shrewdness, sagacity ; was not without a sort of lion-like generosity, and would not have deserted a friend, or betrayed her country, to be the winner of eternal empire. Gentleness, softness, tenderness, compassion, mercy, sympathy—of these words she scarce seems to have known the meaning. Dependence, trust, reliance, save in herself and her own matchless powers, she

* Superior to adversity.

† Equal to prosperity.

knew not. Yet, of the smaller feminine vices, she had full measure and overflowing. Vain as the silliest coquette that flirts and languishes her hour in any modern ball-room; capricious as the moon, and yet more changeful; irascible as the Dead Sea; jealous, exacting, amorous at once and cold; fawning with the cat's velvet touch, and anon scathing with the tiger's unsheathed talons.

Her passions were her armory—fatal to others, powerless against herself. Her love of power was her ruling masculine propensity. To it, manlike, she sacrificed affection, the love of progeny, the delights of home; yet womanlike, she pined for them, even while she sacrificed them; and, doubly womanlike, she hated all those who adopted and enjoyed them; and avenged upon more than one of her best servants his entering on the to her forbidden pleasures of the married life, with a malignity and spite that, on any other grounds, are inexplicable. As a man she had been, perhaps, the greatest who ever trod the earth; for, as I have said, all her vices, all her crimes, arose from the natural strugglings and eruptions of a feminine nature, smothered beneath the iron will, and conquered by the indomitable ambition, of a masculine mind. Yet that feminine nature was ineradicable still, and was only the more distorted and depraved as it was wrested the further from its true and legitimate direction.

As a woman, in private life, had she closely resembled what she was in public, she had been simply hateful, odious, and contemptible; but probably she had not been such. As it is, the fairest way of judging her appears to be, as Hume has observed with his usual shrewdness, to consider her simply as a person of strong common sense, placed in authority over a great nation in very dangerous times, and doing her duty to that nation manfully always, and, in the main, honestly and truly; but, by

the very *vis* and vigor with which she devoted herself to public, unfitting herself for private life ; and therefore, in her private relations, unamiable, imperious, cruel, false, capricious, and a tyrant unto death.

Nursed, from her cradle to her womanhood, in the rough arms of adversity, she was thenceforth to her death the child of authority and fortune. Yet did she live, did she die happy ?

Her rival, Mary, was in all respects nearly her opposite. Her father, James V., of Scotland, was the son of that unhappy James IV. who fell at Flodden, and Margaret, the eldest sister of Henry VIII., and therefore was the first cousin of Elizabeth. He espoused the Duchess of Longueville, the sister of the great Duc de Guise, and the others of that powerful and almost regal house, which during so many reigns held the reins of the French government ; and, after a disturbed and unhappy reign, being defeated, through the disaffection of his nobles, at the battle of Solway, by a mere handful of English spears, fell into a hopeless languor and decline, so that his life was despaired of. At this sad juncture, news was brought to him, he then having no living issue, that his queen was safely delivered ; whereon he asked, was it a male or a female child ? and, being informed that it was the latter, he turned his face to the wall, exclaiming as it is said, "The crown cam' wi' a lassie, and it will awa' wi' a lassie ;" and in a few days expired, leaving those last prophetic words as a sad legacy to his infant heiress.

No sooner was James dead than, precisely as he expected, Henry determined on annexing Scotland to the English crown as an appanage, by means of a marriage between his young son Edward and the infant princess ; and, at first, fortune seemed completely to favor his plans. By means of the Scottish nobles, many of whom, and of high rank, had fallen into his hands at the disastrous rout of Solway, he succeeded in negotiating this

marriage. The Cardinal Primate of Scotland, Beaton, who had, it is said, forged a will in the name of the late king, appointing himself regent, with three other nobles, during Queen Mary's minority, was overpowered and committed to the custody of Lord Seton; while James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, was declared governor. It was thereafter agreed that the queen should remain in Scotland until she should reach the age of ten, when she should be sent to England to be educated and betrothed to the Prince of Wales. Six hostages were to be delivered to Henry for the faithful performance of this contract, and it was stipulated that Scotland, notwithstanding its union with England, should retain all its own laws and privileges.

Well had it been for the young princess, well for her native land, well for the world at large, had that contract held good! Long years of intestine strife—the curse of religious factions rabidly warring amid the feuds of hostile houses, the savage bickerings of rival clans, the fierce and persecuting zeal of ignorant and intolerant preachers, had been spared to Scotland; nay, even to England, it may be, the miseries and civil wars, induced by the accession of the hapless and imbecile house of Stuart, in its most odious and imbecile member, might have passed over; and, assuredly, that infant queen had escaped a life of misery, a death of horror.

Scotland was, however, at this time altogether catholic; the reformation, which soon afterwards outstripped with rampant strides its progress in the neighboring kingdom, taking the hard stern rule of Calvin, instead of the mild form of Lutheran dissent, had scarcely drawn as yet to any head. Naturally, therefore, the pope and the whole of catholic Europe, fearful of the spread of Henry's recent heresy, were willing to go every length to preserve Scotland to the discipline of the true church. Beaton escaped from custody—the ecclesiastics lent him all their

power ; the hereditary jealousy of England was revived among the martial Scottish nobles ; the hostages were denied, although the captive nobles had been suffered to go free on their parole of honor, which they all broke, with one honorable exception, Kennedy, Earl of Cassilis, who, true to his word, returned and surrendered himself to Henry—an honorable action, honorably rewarded by that monarch, who at once set him free without condition. Enraged beyond all bonds of moderation by this duplicity, Henry threw himself into the arms of the emperor, declared war at once on Francis and on Scotland, and waged it unremittingly, but with varied success, during the remainder of his life.

After Henry's decease, and the accession of Edward, the Protector Somerset prosecuted the Scottish war with such ability and success that, after the victory of Pinkie Cleugh, one of the most disastrous to the Scottish ever fought on the soil of Scotland, it was perceived at once, by the queen dowager and the French party, that the only safety for their cause lay in transporting the young queen to France. Even the rival faction was brought to accede to this plan, by the consideration that the presence of the queen was the real cause of the English war, and by the natural animosity created among the warlike and high-spirited nobles, by the devastating and cruel war which raged incessantly on the frontiers. When little more than six years old, then, the queen was conveyed by Villegaignon, with four galleys under his command, to France, where she was at once betrothed to the dauphin, son of Henry II., of France, and Catharine de Medicis—afterwards, for a short space, Francis II.

This was the commencement—this, in truth, the cause, of all her subsequent misfortunes, of all her crimes, of all her sorrows, of her long imprisonment, and of her miserable death. A queen of Scotland, she was brought up from her earliest child-

hood, to all intents and purposes, a French woman. Queen of a country which, ere she returned to dwell in it, and nominally to rule it, had become obstinately, bigotedly, zealously, I might almost say *fiercely*, calvinistic, she was brought up, from her earliest childhood, an ultra catholic—a catholic of the school and house most detested by the protestants throughout Europe, “the bloody stock,” as the covenanters termed it, “of the accursed Guises.” Queen of a country whose inhabitants were, by their physical nature, grave, stern, solemn, precise, and whom the new tenets rendered surly and morose, she was brought up, from her earliest childhood, a queen, as it were, of love and beauty, a creature of levity and mirth, a being to whom music and minstrelsy, the dance, the pageant, the carousal, and the tournament—things abominable and rank in the nostrils of her puritanic lieges—were as the breath of life. Last, and not least, queen of a country the most rigidly moral in Europe, except in the article of feudal homicide and vengeful bloodshedding, she was brought up in a land where to love *par amours* was scarcely held dishonorable to either sex ; where poisoning, in the most artful and diabolical methods, was an everyday occurrence ; where, in a word, adultery and murder were the rules, and not the exceptions of society.

On this period I have been compelled to dwell, to the detriment, I am aware, of the picturesqueness of my narrative ; for it is, if I mistake not, the clue and the key to all that follows.

On the accession of Elizabeth to the crown of England, Mary, then but sixteen years of age, was already married to Francis, the dauphin of France ; and, failing Elizabeth and her issue, was next in true line of blood, as grand-daughter of Margaret, Henry VIII.’s eldest sister ; although that wilful and capricious monarch had passed their house in his testament, and settled the succession on his second sister’s posterity. And here it

must be remembered that, in one of his wicked freaks, Henry had caused Elizabeth to be declared, by act of parliament, illegitimate—and in his unaccountable caprice, though he afterwards caused the succession to be entailed on her after Edward and Mary, he never would permit the repeal of the act of illegitimacy.

Consequently, Elizabeth being illegitimate, Mary was, by the strict letter, *de jure* queen of England. And on this pretext, Henry II., at the instigation of the Guises, forced his son and Mary, nothing loth, to assume both the arms and title of king and queen of England. A woman so jealous, and a sovereign so shrewd, as Elizabeth, was not to be misled or deluded as to the object of such a measure. She knew that this pretension was intended, on opportunity, to be converted into a challenge of her legitimacy and title to her crown.

From that moment she was seized with the keenest jealousy against Mary ; the jealousy of a queen, and of a woman, wronged in the tenderest point, in either quality—her crown disputed, and her honorable birth denied. To this were also added the true small woman's jealousy and spite against a woman fairer, more beloved, more graceful. For Mary was, indeed, lovely beyond the poet's, painter's, sculptor's dream of loveliness ; the perfect symmetry of form and stature, the swanlike curve of the long slender neck, the inimitable features—and yet by Hans Holbein how admirably imitated—the smooth expanse of the bland forehead, the pencilled curve of the dark brows, the melting lustre of the deep hazel eyes, the luxuriance of the rich auburn tresses, are as familiar to us all, of this distant day, as though we had ourselves beheld them—and, to this hour, at the mere name of Mary Stuart, not a man's heart, who has a touch of romance or chivalry within him, but beats something quicker, as if he were in the very presence, and breathing the very atmosphere,

of superhuman beauty. And these glorious gifts ; these, too, were Mary's enemies—in the end were, perhaps, her judges, executioners.

But my limits warn me that I must not linger by the way. Henry II. fell, in a tournament, by a chance thrust of the splintered truncheon of a lance in the hand of Montgomery ; and Francis II. was, for a little space, the King of France, and Mary was his queen, and, for that little space, the happiest of the happy. But still, alas ! for her, she quartered the three English Lions with the Fleurs de Lis of France—still adhered to the fatal style of Queen of France and England !

In proportion as the Scottish character, when left in repose, is calm, grave, resolute, and thoughtful, so is it, when agitated by persecution, or lashed into anger, vehement, enthusiastic, bigoted, savage in its mood. And such it had now become on both sides. The rage was terrible, the hatred insatiable, the strife incessant ; and, as is usual in equally balanced civil or religious factions, each looked abroad for aid—the catholics to France, the protestants to England. And, on the instant, discerning her peril while it was yet far aloof, sagacious, prompt, and possessing the advantage—immense in warfare—of proximity, Elizabeth lent aid so prompt, so powerful, and so effectual, that the French auxiliaries were compelled to evacuate Scotland, never to return thither in force ; and the reformers gained such an ascendancy that they were never again, for any considerable period, overawed by the catholic party, which thenceforth waned in Scotland daily.

By these most wise and politic steps, Elizabeth not only secured the safety of her own realm against the peril of a joint French and Scottish war, brought to bear on her only assailable point, the northern marches, and her own title against the claims of Mary, but she created for herself a powerful party in

the heart of the sister kingdom, by which she was regarded—as, indeed, she was in Switzerland, Holland, Germany, nay, in the Huguenot provinces of France itself—as the friend and protectress of the protestant religion.

Her conquering fleet and army compelled the treaty of Edinburgh, in which it was stipulated, among other provisions highly favorable to England, “that the King and Queen of France should thenceforth abstain from bearing the arms of England, or assuming the title of that kingdom.”

At this critical moment, Francis II. died of a sudden disorder, and Mary was left a lovely, youthful widow of nineteen. She desisted, it is true, after the death of Francis, from bearing the arms of England; yet, with inconceivable obstinacy and pride, she refused to ratify the treaty of Edinburgh, thereby giving mortal and personal offence to the most powerful and most unforgiving of queens or women.

Shortly after this event, her residence in France being rendered unpleasant by the demeanor of the queen-mother, who hated her, she determined to return home, and asked, through D’Oisel, the French ambassador, a safe conduct through England to her own dominions. This Elizabeth very naturally refused until she should ratify the treaty of Edinburgh, and so demonstrate that she had relinquished her injurious pretensions to the crown of England.

Stung to the quick, high-spirited, and full of youthful fire, Mary delivered a reply to Throckmorton, the English ambassador, which, though mingled with courteous expressions, savored too much of a defiance to have any effect but that of increasing the animosity and indignation of Elizabeth, who at once equipped a fleet, with the avowed intent of putting down piracy in the Channel, but, doubtless, with the real purpose of intercepting Mary on her homeward voyage.

Phrase it as they might, the kinswomen were now rival queens, rival beauties; for Elizabeth, too, fancied herself a beauty. The cousins were thenceforth—until death, that great disseverer of friendships, that sole conciliator of feuds, should separate them—mortal enemies.

A fog favored her evasion; and the galley which bore her sailed unchallenged through the centre of the English fleet. It is said that she was affected with a strange melancholy, a dim foreboding of future woe, as she sailed from Calais. She gazed on the land which had, in truth, been her country, until its outlines were lost in the haze of falling night; and then, ordering her couch to be spread on the deck *al fresco*, commanded the pilot to awaken her should the coast be in sight at daybreak. The night was calm and breezeless, and the ship had made so little way that the first sunbeams fell upon the sand-hills nigh to Calais. Her parting words are yet remembered with which she bade farewell to the land in which alone she knew one hour of happiness: "*Adieu, belle France; adieu, France, bien chérie! Jamais, jamais, ne te je reverrai plus!*"

Her sad forebodings were but too fatally confirmed; the sullen, mutinous brutality of the calvinistic rabble, the fierce and atrocious insolence of John Knox, the rude and unknightly ferocity of the reforming nobles, rendered her court a very dungeon. Although she made no effort to restore the ancient religion or arrest the march of reformation, her own profession of the Romish creed condemned her in the eyes of those stern religionists; and her very graces and accomplishments, her youthful gaiety and natural love of innocent pleasures, caused the ranting preachers of the calvinistic church to denounce her to her face, as a "painted Jezebel," a "dancing Herodias," a "daughter of Belial;" and it is, doubtless, to their unprovoked insolence and unchristian fury that must be ascribed her after

errors, indiscretions, vices, and—the word must be written, for it is history, not fiction, that I am now writing—crimes.

Who knows not the dreadful provocations she received—the cruel and ungrateful neglect of the stupid and unworthy Darnley—the base and bloody butchery, before her eyes, of the “Italian minion,” Rizzio—when, to the woman’s natural weakness, was added the debility of one about to be a mother?

Who knows not the horrible catastrophe of the Kirk of Field, and Darnley’s miserable murder, contrived, unquestionably, by that black-hearted wretch, Bothwell, thereafter Duke of Orkney?

Who knows not the sad and guilty tale, how the confederate lords first called on her to punish, then recommended her, under their written signatures—such of them, at least, as could write—to marry, that same Bothwell? How he abducted her by force, and then set her free unscathed? How she espoused him, and was then dethroned, and imprisoned in the dreary fortress of Lochlorn, by the very lords who had counselled her to wed him; by her own base-born brother, the wise, but wicked, regent Murray? How she escaped thence by the devotion of George Douglas, fought the disastrous battle of Langside, only to see her last friends fall around her, battling to the last in vain for Mary and the church, for “God and the Queen,” their chivalrous, their loyal, and their solemn war-cry?

She fled to England, to Elizabeth, who had shown sympathy thus far, shown even generosity, in her behalf, and interposed her offices to deliver her from imprisonment; though she had hesitated to declare war on the regent, fearing, as she avowed, lest open war should drive him to extremity. In this I believe she spoke truly. For it suited not her policy to allow the spectacle of subjects dethroning a lawful sovereign to come before the eyes of the world.

When once, however, she had the hapless Mary in her power,

all generosity, all sympathy, all scruples vanished. Elizabeth was no longer the sister queen, the cousin, and the ally. No; if not yet the embittered and jealous woman, the enemy determined on her victim's death, she was, at least, simply and solely the Queen of England; the resolute, hard-minded, politic, ambitious queen, with her country's interests pre-eminent, above all things, at her heart; the woman, who—to use her own noble words delivered to her troops at Tilbury, when the vast arms of the Invincible Armada were outstretched to encircle her England, and the unconquered infantry of Castile were revelling already, in anticipation, in the beauty and the wealth of London—if she were a woman, “had yet the heart of a man within her, and that man a King of England.”

In the first instance, it is probable that, in persuading Mary to undergo the degradation of standing trial for the assassination of her husband, against her own rebellious subjects, her object was solely to gain the eminent position of being selected arbitress between a sovereign realm and its dethroned and fugitive princess; and that she had, as yet, decided nothing of her future movements.

Mary's grand error, or rather the grand error of her counsellors, was the submitting to the trial, under any show or pretext. As to the trial itself, it seems to have been conducted fairly, so far as we can judge; and, as it was broken off by Mary's own action, we must admit that it was going unfavorably for her. Yet it is difficult not to doubt, not almost to believe, that the letters, produced so late in the day by the regent, were, as they are always alleged by Mary's defenders to have been, forgeries.

In this state of the case, the trial being broken off by Mary's own refusal to proceed, Elizabeth dismissed the regent, pronouncing no judgment on the cause, refused to see Mary, or

receive her as a queen ; and subsequently committed her, first, to honorable free custody, then to close custody, and, lastly, to strict and absolute imprisonment.

What could she do ? What should she have done ?

She could have received her in her court as a sister, an honored and invited guest. Against this was the plea that she could not extend the hand of friendship to one suspected, and almost convicted, of petty treason in the assassination of a husband.

She could, perhaps, have reinstated her *vi et armis* in her own seat of power. Against this was the plea that she could not, in common policy, beat down a protestant power for the benefit of a catholic power, a friendly Scottish power for the benefit of a hostile French power.

She could have dismissed her, as she claimed to be dismissed, and suffered her to return to her loved, her almost native France. Against this was the plea that she could not, in justice to herself, to England, permit a princess almost French to return to hostile France, in order to set forth anew—as undoubtedly she would have set forth—her title to the English crown ; and to enforce it, perhaps, by a united crusade of France and Spain, now closely allied, against the liberties, against the religion of England.

What should she have done ?

Alas ! what should she ? Had they been both private persons, the question is answered without a thought : she should have been generous, and dismissed her. But have kings—they to whom the charge of the life, the happiness, of millions is intrusted—have kings the right to indulge in the luxury of generosity, when that generosity must needs entail destruction on thousands alive and happy ? I answer confidently, they have *not* the right. But Elizabeth was not generous. She

imprisoned her fallen rival, cruelly, for long and weary years ; unjustly, in accordance with right and law—justly, in accordance with true policy, and the welfare of her own country and the world at large.

The question of the execution is less doubtful. That Mary was privy to Norfolk's, to Babington's plot is, I fear, proved beyond a doubt. It was a question of life and death between the two, and nothing but the axe or the knife could end it. The axe ended it ; and we cannot, I think, regret the catastrophe, however much we may deplore the fate of the lovely, the miserable, the deeply-injured Mary—however much we may condemn the perfidiousness, the cold-blooded duplicity, the bitter malignity, the hard-hearted policy of Elizabeth.

Yet she, too, was avenged. For who can doubt that the death of Elizabeth—agonized by secret remorse, refusing sustenance or aid of medicine, groaning her soul away in undiscovered sorrow for ten whole nights and days of unknown anguish, perishing like a gaunt, old, famished lioness, in despair at the deeds herself had done—was more tremendous fifty-fold, and fifty-fold less pitied, than that of her discrowned rival ?

Sir Walter Raleigh and his Wife.

1618.



SIR WALTER RALEIGH AND HIS WIFE.

It is commonly said, and appears generally to be believed, by superficial students of history, that with the reigns of the Plantagenets, with the Edwards and the Henries of the fifteenth century, the age of chivalry was ended, the spirit of romance became extinct. To those, however, who have looked carefully into the annals of the long and glorious reign of the great Elizabeth, it becomes evident that, so far from having passed away with the tilt and tournament, with the complete suits of knightly armor, and the perilous feats of knight-errantry, the fire of chivalrous courtesy and chivalrous adventure never blazed more brightly, than at the very moment when it was about to expire amid the pedantry and cowardice, the low gluttony and shameless drunkenness, which disgraced the accession of the first James to the throne of England. Nor will the brightest and most glorious names of fabulous or historic chivalry, the Tancreds and Godfreys of the crusades, the Olivers and Rolands of the court of Charlemagne, the Cid Campeador of old Castile, or the *preux* Bayard of France, that *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, exceed the lustre which encircles, to this day, the characters of Essex, Howard, Philip Sidney, Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, and Walter Raleigh.

It was full time that, at this period, maritime adventure had

superseded the career of the barbed war-horse, and the brunt of the levelled spear: and that to foray on the Spanish colonies beyond the line, where, it was said, truce or peace never came; to tempt the perils of the tropical seas in search of the Eldorado, or the Fountain of Health and Youth, in the fabled and magical realms of central Florida; and to colonize the forest shores of the virgin wilderness of the west, was now paramount in the ardent minds of England's martial youth, to the desire of obtaining distinction in the bloody battle-fields of the Low Countries, or in the fierce religious wars of Hungary and Bohemia. And of these hot spirits, the most ardent, the most adventurous, the foremost in everything that savored of romance or gallantry, was the world-renowned Sir Walter Raleigh.

Born of an honorable and ancient family in Devonshire, he early came to London in order to push his fortunes, as was the custom in those days with the cadets of illustrious families whose worldly wealth was unequal to their birth and station, by the chances of court favor, or the readier advancement of the sword. At this period, Elizabeth was desirous of lending assistance to the French Huguenots, who had been recently defeated in the bloody battle of Jarnac, and who seemed to be in considerable peril of being utterly overpowered by their cruel and relentless enemies the Guises; while she was at the same time wholly disinclined to involve England in actual strife, by regular and declared hostilities.

She gave permission, therefore, to Henry Champernon to raise a regiment of gentlemen volunteers, and to transport them into France. In the number of these, young Walter Raleigh enrolled, and thenceforth his career may be said to have commenced; for from that time scarce a desperate or glorious adventure was essayed, either by sea or land, in which he was not a participator. In this, his first great school of military

valor and distinction, he served with so much spirit, and such display of gallantry and aptitude for arms, that he immediately attracted attention, and, on his return to England in 1570, after the pacification, and renewal of the edicts for liberty of conscience, found himself at once a marked man.

It seems that, about this time, in connexion with Nicholas Blount and others, who afterwards attained to both rank and eminence, Raleigh attached himself to the Earl of Essex, who at that time disputed with Leicester the favors, if not the affection, of Elizabeth; and, while in his suite, had the fortune to attract the notice of that princess by the handsomeness of his figure, and the gallantry of his attire; she, like her father Henry, being quick to observe and apt to admire those who were eminently gifted with the thews and sinews of a man.

A strangely romantic incident was connected with his first rise in the favor of the virgin queen, which is so vigorously and brilliantly described by another and even more renowned Sir Walter in his splendid romance of *Kenilworth*, that it shames us to attempt it with our far inferior pen; but it is so characteristic of the man and of the times that it may not be passed over in silence.

Being sent once on a mission—so runs the tale—by his lord to the queen, at Greenwich, he arrived just as she was issuing in state from the palace to take her barge, which lay manned and ready at the stairs. Repulsed by the gentlemen pensioners, and refused access to her majesty until after her return from the excursion, the young esquire stood aloof, to observe the passing of the pageant; and, seeing the queen pause and hesitate on the brink of a pool of rain-water which intersected her path, no convenience being at hand wherewith to bridge it, took off his crimson cloak, handsomely laid down with gold lace, his only courtlike garment, fell on one knee, and with doffed cap

and downcast eyes threw it over the puddle, so that the queen passed across dry-shod, and swore by God's life—her favorite oath—that there was chivalry and manhood still in England.

Immediately thereafter, he was summoned to be a member of the royal household, and was retained about the person of the queen, who condescended to acts of much familiarity, jesting, capping verses, and playing at the court games of the day with him—not a little, it is believed, to the chagrin of the haughty and unworthy favorite, Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

It does not appear, however, that, although she might coquet with Raleigh to gratify her own love of admiration, and to enjoy the charms of his rich and fiery eloquence and versatile wit, though she might advance him in his career of arms, and even stimulate his vaulting ambition to deeds of yet wilder enterprise, she ever esteemed Raleigh as he deserved to be esteemed, or penetrated the depths of his imaginative and creative genius, much less beloved him personally, as she did the vain and petty ambitious Leicester, or the high-spirited, the valorous, the hapless Essex.

Another anecdote is related of this period, which will serve in no small degree to illustrate this trait of Elizabeth's strangely-mingled nature. Watching with the ladies of her court in the gardens of one of her royal residences, as was her jealous and suspicious usage, the movements of her young courtier, when he either believed, or affected to believe himself unobserved, she saw him write a line on a pane of glass in a garden pavilion with a diamond ring, which, on inspecting it subsequently to his departure, she found to read in this wise:—

“Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall—”

the sentence, or the distich rather, being thus left unfinished,

when, with her royal hand, she added the second line—no slight encouragement to so keen and fiery a temperament as that of him for whom she wrote, when given to him from such a source—

“If thy heart fail thee, do not climb at all.”

But his heart never failed him—not in the desperate strife with the Invincible Armada—not when he discovered and won for the English crown the wild shores of the tropical Guiana—not when he sailed the first far up the mighty Orinoco—not when, in after days, he stormed Cadiz—not when the favor of Elizabeth was forfeited—not in the long years of irksome, solitary, heart-breaking imprisonment, endured at the hands of that base, soulless despot, the first James of England—not at his parting from his beloved and lovely wife—not on the scaffold, where he died as he had lived—a dauntless, chivalrous, high-minded English gentleman.

The greatest error of his life was his pertinacious hostility to Essex, originating in the jealousy of that brave, but rash and headstrong leader, who disgraced and suspended him after the taking of Fayal, a circumstance which he never forgave or forgot—an error which ultimately cost him his own life, since it alienated from him the affections of the English people, and rendered them pitiless to him in his own extremity.

But his greatest crime, in the eyes of Elizabeth, the crime which lost him her good graces for ever and neutralized all his services on the flood and in the field, rendering ineffective even the strange letter which he addressed to his friend, Sir Robert Cecil, and which was doubtless shown to the queen, although it failed to move her implacable and iron heart, was his marriage, early in life, to the beautiful and charming Elizabeth Throgmorton. The letter to which I have alluded is so curious that I cannot refrain from quoting it entire, as a most singular illus-

tration of the habits of that age of chivalry, and of the character of that strange compound, Elizabeth, who, to the "heart of a man, and that man a king of England," to quote her own eloquent and noble diction, added the vanity and conceit of the weakest and most frivolous of womankind; and who, at the age of sixty years, chose to be addressed as a Diana and a Venus, a nymph, a goddess, and an angel.

"My heart," he wrote, "was never till this day, that I hear the queen goes away so far off, whom I have followed so many years, with so great love and desire, in so many journeys, and am now left behind here, in a dark prison all alone. While she was yet near at hand, that I might hear of her once in two or three days, my sorrows were the less; but even now my heart is cast into the depth of all misery. I, that was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus, the gentle wind blowing her hair about her pure cheeks like a nymph, sometimes sitting in the shade like a goddess, sometimes singing like an angel, sometimes playing like Orpheus. Behold the sorrow of this world! Once a miss has bereaved me of all. Oh! glory, that only shineth in misfortune, what is become of thy assurance? All wounds have scars but that of fantasy: all affections their relentings but that of womankind. Who is the judge of friendship but adversity? or when is grace witnessed but in offences? There was no divinity but by reason of compassion; for revenges are brutish and mortal. All those times past, the loves, the sighs, the sorrows, the desires, cannot they weigh down one frail misfortune? Cannot one drop of gall be his in so great heaps of sweetness? I may then conclude, '*spes et fortuna valet*;' she is gone in whom I trusted, and of me hath not one thought of mercy, nor any respect of that which was. Do with me now, therefore, what you list. I am more weary of life

than they are desirous that I should perish ; which, if, it had been for her, as it is by her, I had been too happily born."

It is singular enough that such a letter should have been written, under any circumstances, by a middle-aged courtier to an aged queen ; but it becomes far more remarkable and extraordinary when we know that the life of Raleigh was not so much as threatened at the time when he wrote ; and, so far had either of the parties ever been from entertaining any such affection the one for the other as could alone, according to modern ideas, justify such fervor of language, that Elizabeth was at that time pining with frustrated affection and vain remorse for the death of her beloved Essex ; which, in the end, broke a heart which had defied all machinations of murderous conspiracies, all menaces, all overtures of the most powerful and martial princes to sway it from its stately and impassive magnanimity ; while Raleigh was possessed by the most ardent and enduring affection to the almost perfect woman whom he held it his proudest trophy to have wedded, and who justified his entire devotion by her love unmoved through good or ill report, and proved to the utmost in the dungeon and on the scaffold—the love of a pure, high-minded, trusting woman, confident, and fearless, and faithful to the end.

It does not appear that Raleigh suspected the true cause of Elizabeth's alienation from so good and great a servant : perhaps no one man of the many whom for the like cause she neglected, disgraced, persecuted, knew that the cause existed in the fact of their having taken to themselves partners of life and happiness—a solace which she sacrificed to the sterile honors of an undivided crown—of their enjoying the bliss and perfect contentment of a happy wedded life, while she, who would fain have enjoyed the like, could she have done so without the loss of some portion of her independent and undivided authority,

was compelled, by her own jealousy of power and obstinacy of will, to pine in lonely and unloved virginity.

Yet such was doubtless the cause of his decline in the royal favor, which he never, in after days, regained ; for, after Essex was dead by her award and deed, Elizabeth, in her furious and lion-like remorse, visited his death upon the heads of all those who had been his enemies in life, or counselled her against him, even when he was in arms against her crown : nor forgave them any more than she forgave herself, who died literally broken-hearted, the most lamentable and disastrous of women, if the proudest and most fortunate of queens, in the heyday of her fortunes, when she had raised her England to that proud and pre-eminent station above rather than among the states of Europe, from which she never declined, save for a brief space under her successors, those weakest and wickedest of English kings, the ominous and ill-starred Stuarts, and which she still maintains in her hale and superb old age, savoring, after nearly nine centuries of increasing might and scarcely interrupted rule, in no respect of decrepitude or decay.

Her greatest crime was the death of Mary Stuart ; her greatest misfortune, the death of Essex ; her greatest shame, the disgrace of Walter Raleigh. But with all her crimes, all her misfortunes, all her shame, she was a great woman and a glorious queen, and in both qualities peculiarly and distinctively English. The stay and bulwark of her country's freedom and religion, she lived and died possessed of that rarest and most divine gift to princes, her people's unmixed love and veneration.

She died in an ill day, and was succeeded by one in all respects her opposite : a coward, a pedant, a knave, a tyrant, a mean, base, beastly sensualist—a bad man, devoid even of a bad man's one redeeming virtue, physical courage—a bad, weak man, with the heart of a worse and weaker woman—a man with all

the vices of the brute creation, without one of their virtues. His instincts and impulses were all vile and low, crafty and cruel; his principles—if his rules of action, which were all founded on cheaterly and subtle craft, can be called principles—were yet baser than his instinctive impulses.

He is the only man I know, recorded in history, who is solely odious, contemptible, and bestial, without one redeeming trait, one feature of mind or body that can preserve him from utter and absolute detestation and damnation of all honorable and manly minds.

He is the only king of whom, from his cradle to his grave, no one good deed, no generous, or bold, or holy, or ambitious, much less patriotic or aspiring, thought or action is related.

His soul was akin to the mud, of which his body was framed—to the slime of loathsome and beastly debauchery, in which he wallowed habitually with his court and the ladies of his court, and his queen at their head, and could no more have soared heavenward than the garbage-battered vulture could have soared to the noble falcon's pitch and pride of place.

This beast,* for I cannot bring myself to write him man or king, with the usual hatred and jealousy of low foul minds towards everything noble and superior, early conceived a hatred for the gallant and great Sir Walter Raleigh, whose enterprise and adventure he had just intellect enough to comprehend so far as to fear them, but of whose patriotism, chivalry, innate nobility of soul, romantic daring, splendid imagination, and vast literary conceptions—being utterly unconscious himself of such emotions—he was no more capable of forming a conception,

* I would here caution my readers from placing the slightest confidence in anything stated in Hume's History (*fable?*) of the Stuarts, and especially of this, the worst of a bad breed.

than is the burrowing mole of appreciating the flight of the soaring eagle.

So early as the second year of his reign, he contrived to have this great discoverer and gallant soldier—to whom Virginia is indebted for the honor of being the first English colony, Jamestown having been settled in 1606, whereas the Puritans landed on the rock of Plymouth no earlier than 1620, and to whom North Carolina has done honor creditable to herself in naming her capital after him, the first English colonist—arraigned on a false charge of conspiracy in the case of Arabella Stuart, a young lady as virtuous and more unfortunate than sweet Jane Grey, whose treatment by James would alone have been enough to stamp him with eternal infamy, and for whose history we refer our readers to the fine novel by Mr. James on this subject.

At this time, Raleigh was unpopular in England, on account of his supposed complicity in the death of Essex; and, on the strength of this unpopularity, he was arraigned, on the single *written* testimony of one Cobham, a pardoned convict of the same conspiracy, which testimony he afterwards retracted, and then again retracted the retraction, and—without one concurring circumstance, without being confronted with the prisoner, after shameless persecution from Sir Edward Coke, the great lawyer, then attorney-general—was found guilty by the jury, and sentenced, contrary to all equity and justice, to the capital penalties of high treason.

From this year, 1604, until 1618, a period of nearly fourteen years, not daring to put him at that time to death, he caused him to be confined strictly in the Tower, a cruel punishment for so quick and active a spirit, which he probably expected would speedily release him by a natural death from one whom he regarded as a dangerous and resolute foe, whom he dared nei-

ther openly to dispatch nor honorably to release from unmerited and arbitrary confinement.

But his cruel anticipations were signally frustrated by the noble constancy, and calm, self-sustained intrepidity of the noble prisoner, who, to borrow the words of the detractor, Hume, "being educated amid naval and military enterprises, had surpassed, in the pursuits of literature, even those of the most recluse and sedentary lives."

Supported and consoled by his exemplary and excellent wife, he was enabled to entertain the irksome days and nights of his solitary imprisonment by the composition of a work, which, if deficient in the points which are now, in the advanced state of human sciences, considered essential to a great literary creation, is, as regarded under the circumstances of its conception and execution, one of the greatest exploits of human ingenuity and human industry—"The History of the World, by Sir Walter Raleigh."

It was during his imprisonment also that he projected the colonization of Jamestown, which was carried out in 1606, at his instigation, by the Bristol Company, of which he was a member. This colony, though it was twice deserted, was in the end successful, and in it was born the first child, Virginia Dare by name, of that Anglo-Saxon race which has since conquered a continent, and surpassed, in the nonage of its republican sway, the maturity of mighty nations.

In 1618, induced by the promises of Raleigh to put the English crown in possession of a gold mine which he asserted, and probably believed he had discovered in Guiana, James, whose avidity always conquered his resentments, and who, like Faustus, would have sold his soul—had he had one to sell—for gold, released him, and granting him, as he asserted, an unconditional pardon—but, as James and his counsellors maintain, one

conditional on fresh discoveries—sent him out at the head of twelve armed vessels.

What follows is obscure ; but it appears that Raleigh, failing to discover the mines, attacked and plundered the little town of St. Thomas, which the Spaniards had built on the territories of Guiana, which Raleigh had acquired three-and-twenty years before for the English crown, and which James, with his wonted pusillanimity, had allowed the Spaniards to occupy, without so much as a remonstrance.

This conduct of Raleigh must be admitted unjustifiable, as Spain and England were then in a state of profound peace ; and the plea that truce or peace with Spain never crossed the line, though popular in England in those days of Spanish aggression and Romish intolerance, cannot for a moment stand the test either of reason or of law.

Falling into suspicion with his comrades, Sir Walter was brought home in irons, and delivered into the hands of the pitiless and rancorous king, who resolved to destroy him—yet, dreading to awaken popular indignation by delivering him up to Spain, caused to revive the ancient sentence, which had never been set aside by a formal pardon, and cruelly and unjustly executed him on that spot, so consecrated by the blood of noble patriots and holy martyrs, the dark and gory scaffold of Tower Hill.

And here, in conclusion, I can do no better than to quote from an anonymous writer in a recent English magazine, the following brief tribute to his high qualities, and sad doom, accompanied by his last exquisite letter to his wife.

“His mind was indeed of no common order. With him, the wonders of earth and the dispensations of heaven were alike welcome ; his discoveries at sea, his adventures abroad, his attacks on the colonies of Spain, were all arenas of glory to him

—but he was infinitely happier by his own fireside, in recalling the spirits of the great in the history of his country—nay, was even more contented in the gloom of his ill-deserved prison, with the volume of genius or the book of life before him, than in the most animating successes of the battle-field.

“The event which clouded his prosperity and destroyed his influence with the queen—his marriage with Elizabeth Throgmorton—was the one upon which he most prided himself; and justly, too—for, if ever woman was created the companion, the solace of man—if ever wife was deemed the dearest thing of earth to which earth clings, that woman was his wife. Not merely in the smiles of the court did her smiles make a world of sunshine to her Raleigh; not merely when the destruction of the Armada made her husband’s name glorious; not merely when his successes and his discoveries on the ocean made his presence longed for at the palace, did she interweave her best affections with the lord of her heart. It was in the hour of adversity she became his dearest companion, his ‘ministering angel;’ and when the gloomy walls of the accursed Tower held all her empire of love, how proudly she owned her sovereignty! Not even before the feet of her haughty mistress, in her prayerful entreaties for her dear Walter’s life, did she so eminently shine forth in all the majesty of feminine excellence as when she guided his counsels in the dungeon, and nerved his mind to the trials of the scaffold, where, in his manly fortitude, his noble self-reliance, the people, who mingled their tears with his triumph, saw how much the patriot was indebted to the woman.

“Were there no other language but that of simple, honest affection, what a world of poetry would remain to us in the universe of love! You may be excited to sorrow for his fate by recalling the varied incidents of his attractive life; you may mourn over the ruins of his chapel at his native village: you

may weep over the fatal result of his ill-starred patriotism—you may glow over his successes in the field or on the wave; your lip may curl with scorn at the miserable jealousy of Elizabeth—your eye may kindle with wrath at the pitiful tyranny of James—but how will your sympathies be so awakened as by reading his last, simple, touching letter to his wife?

“‘You receive, my dear wife, my last words, in these my last lines. My love I send you that you may keep it when I am dead—and my counsel, that you may remember it when I am no more. I would not with my will present you with sorrows, dear Bess—let them go to the grave with me and be buried in the dust—and, seeing that it is not the will of God that I should see you any more, bear my destruction patiently, and with a heart like yourself.

“‘First—I send you all the thanks which my heart can conceive, or my words express, for your many travails and cares for me, which, though they have not taken effect as you wished, yet my debt to you is not the less; but pay it I never shall in this world.

“‘Secondly—I beseech you, for the love you bear me living, that you do not hide yourself many days, but by your travails seek to help my miserable fortunes and the right of your poor child—your mourning cannot avail me that am dust—for I am no more yours, nor you mine—death hath cut us asunder, and God hath divided me from the world, and you from me.

“‘I cannot write much. God knows how hardly I steal this time when all sleep. Beg my dead body, which, when living, was denied you, and lay it by our father and mother—I can say no more—time and death call me away; the everlasting God—the powerful, infinite, and inscrutable God, who is goodness itself, the true light and life, keep you and yours, and have

mercy upon me, and forgive my persecutors and false accusers, and send us to meet in his glorious kingdom.

"My dear wife—farewell! Bless my boy—pray for me, and let the true God hold you both in his arms.

"‘Yours, that was; but now, not mine own,

“‘WALTER RALEIGH.’

"Thus a few fond words convey more poetry to the heart than a whole world of verse.

"We know not any man's history more romantic in its commencement, or more touching in its close, than that of Raleigh—from the first dawn of his fortunes, when he threw his cloak before the foot of royalty, throughout his brilliant rise and long imprisonment to the hour when royalty rejoiced in his merciless martyrdom.

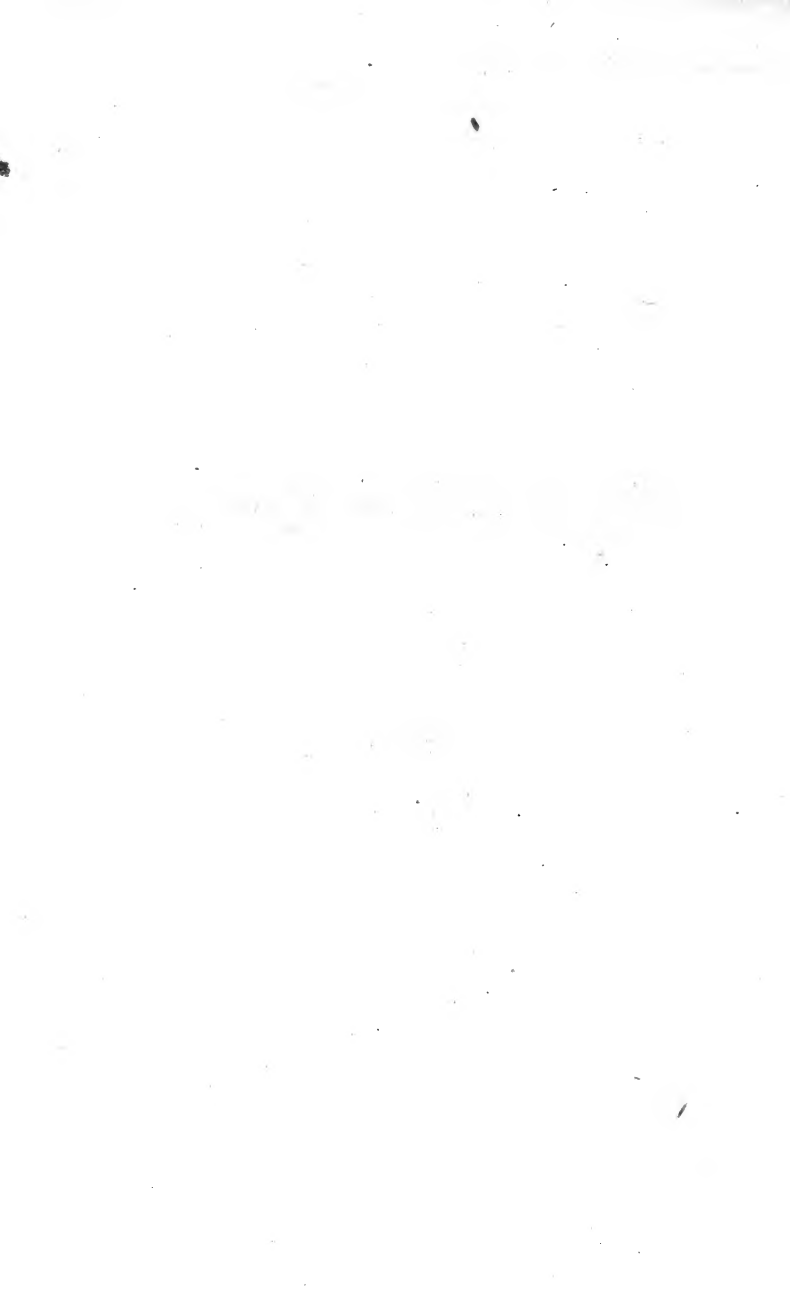
"Whether the recital of his eloquent speeches, the perusal of his vigorous and original poetry, or the narration of his quaint yet profound ‘History of the World,’ engage our attention, all will equally impress us with admiration of his talent, with wonder at his achievements, with sympathy in his misfortunes, and with pity at his fall.”

When he was brought upon the scaffold, he felt the edge of the axe with which he was to be beheaded, and observed, “’Tis a sharp remedy, but a sure one for all ills,” harangued the people calmly, eloquently, and conclusively, in defence of his character, laid his head on the block with indifference, and died as he had lived—undaunted, one of the greatest benefactors of both England and America, judicially murdered by the pitiful spite of the basest and worst of England's monarchs. James could slay his body, but his fame shall live for ever.



Oliver Cromwell and Charles 1.

1648.



CROMWELL AND CHARLES I.

IN the first years of the seventeenth century, there stood a small and dilapidated grange, or old-fashioned farm-house, on the outskirts of the little borough town of St. Joes, in Huntingdonshire, the seat of the last scion of a noble family, now lapsed from its high estate and fallen into unmerited decay—the family of Cromwell—which had been distinguished so long before as the reign of Henry VIII., and which even claimed to share the royal blood of the unhappy race of Stuarts, whom they were destined, in the end, to supplant by energy of will and arbitration of the sword.

The present tenant of that desolate and dismal grange was a young man, the heir and sole remaining stay of the old house, a strong, thick-set, ungraceful person, with large, coarse features, redeemed, however, in the eye at least of the physiognomist, by the fine massive forehead, and the singular expression of thought, combined with immutable resolve and indomitable will, which pervaded all his features.

It was a dark and stormy night of November, and the wind was wailing with a sad and hollow sound among the stunted willows which surrounded the old farm-house, nurtured by the stagnant waters of the broad cuts and dikes made for the drainage of the sour and sterile soil from which they sprang. But

the night was not more gloomy than the countenance, perhaps than the thoughts, of the ruined agriculturist, who sat alone by the cheerless hearth, poring over the maps and plans of extensive fen improvements, in which he had sunk the remnant of his impoverished fortunes, by the dim light of a single waning lamp.

There were no ornaments of any kind to be seen in the dismal apartment, unless a few weapons and pieces of old armor hanging on the walls, upon which the fitful light of the wood fire played with varying flashes, might be called ornaments. The floor was of brick, sanded; the walls exhibited their bare and paintless plaster; the furniture was of the humblest—two or three straight-backed oaken chairs, the ponderous table at which he sat, strewn with papers of calculation, maps, and diagrams, and one large book clasped with brass and bound in greasy calf-skin, which, by its shape, was evidently the volume of Holy Writ. Another trevet table, in the chimney corner, supported a coarse, brown loaf, a crust of old cheese, and a black jack of small ale, the supper of the agricultural speculator; of the visionary and enthusiastical religionist.

At length he arose from the table, before which he had been so long seated, and traversed the room with heavy and resounding steps, his hands clasped behind his back and his head bowed forward on his chest, muttering half-heard words between his close-set teeth, and occasionally heaving deep sighs. After a while he paused, as he reached the trevet table, took a deep draught of ale from the black jack, and then, opening the ponderous Bible, read a chapter of Isaiah, one of the most fiercely denunciatory against Pharaoh and the princes of Egypt, after which he cast himself on his knees and unburdened himself of a long, rambling, vehement, extemporaneous prayer, which, ac-

according to our notions, partook far more of the nature of cursing than of praying, of blasphemy than of piety.

This duty performed, he took up the lamp from the table, and leaving the room, ascended a great, creaking, half-dismantled staircase, which led to a sort of corridor with many doors of sleeping apartments opening upon it. Into one of these he entered, locking the door behind him, and securing it with several heavy bolts, and, setting down his light upon a rude oaken bureau, placed his broadsword beneath his pillow, and disattired himself with great haste and little ceremony.

Within five minutes the light was extinguished and the man ensconced in the old-fashioned bed-clothes of a huge four-post tester-bed, which had once, evidently, like its occupant, known better days, surrounded with heavy curtains of faded and moth-fretted damask drawn closely around it on all sides. For a time, all was silent, except the heavy breathing—degenerating at times into what seemed almost sighs—of the sleeper, and the occasional howl of a mastiff without, baying the moon, when, at fitful intervals, she waded out from among the giant clouds, and cast her wavering and pallid gleams, fleeting like ghosts along the bare walls of that great unfurnished chamber.

What followed would be too strange, too improbable for grave recital, were it not that we find it recorded, beyond the possibility of cavil, in contemporaneous history, long before the occurrence of the events which it would seem to foreshadow ; and it was undoubtedly accredited as a fact by the early associates and comrades of the great and extraordinary man, of whom it is related, and whose actual life was as real, as practical, and as stern, as his inner existence was visionary, morbidly fanciful, and fanatically enthusiastical.

His curtains, he avowed ever, were drawn asunder with a loud jingling of the rings by which they were suspended, and he

might see, in the opening of their folds, a misty shape, gigantic, but undefined, while a voice thundered in his ears, mightier than any human utterance, "Arise, Oliver, arise! thou that shalt be, not king, but the first man in England!"

And this was thrice repeated; and thenceforth a new spirit was awakened in the soul of the strong, iron-minded, adamant-willed visionary, whose very superstitions were to him, not as to other men, weaknesses, but strength—an impenetrable armor for his own defence; an indomitable weapon against his enemies; and the name of that new spirit, though it may well be he who felt it knew it not, was ambition.

The name of that man was Oliver Cromwell, and of a surety in after times he was, "although not king, the first man in England," the first not in his own days but perhaps in all days—not only then, but now, and perhaps for ever.

Despite all his errors, all his crimes—for the ambitious rarely fail of crime—this is his great redemption, that he was purely, patriotically English; that, with him, his country, and his country's greatness, were ever the leading objects, paramount to self; and that when, by his own energy and will, he had made himself "the first man in England," he rested not from his fierce struggle with the world till he had rendered "England the first realm in Europe," and the name of Englishman as much respected throughout Christendom as was that in the ancient time of "civis Romanus."

Nearly at the same date with the occurrence above related, the throne of England was ascended, among the general rejoicings and almost universal satisfaction of his people, by a young, graceful, and amiable prince, son of an old, debauched, degraded, drunken despot, half pedant and half fool, addicted to vices which are so hideous as to lack a name; as a king, and as a man, alike without one virtue, one redeeming phase

of character ; an animal, in one word, unworthy to be styled a man, who lived detested, and died amid the secret joy and scarcely simulated mourning of the subjects by whom he had been scarcely tolerated while alive and powerful.

Popular himself, and wedded happily while young to a young and beautiful princess—the daughter of one of the greatest and the most popular of European princes, Henry IV. of France ; singularly handsome ; learned enough for a gentleman and king—skilful in manly exercises—grave and decorous, perhaps somewhat austere, but ever with a gracious and serene austerity in his deportment ; really and genuinely pious, and devoted heart and soul to the doctrines of the church of England ; singularly pure in his morals, and virtuous, without a stain in his domestic relations—Charles I., of England, might have been, had he but seen the right path and taken it, the most popular, and one of the greatest of the kings of England ; he was the weakest, though by no means the worst, and the most unfortunate.

His first and greatest misfortune was the period of his birth, an absolute, or nearly absolute monarch, when the limits of royal prerogative and parliamentary privilege, of royal power and popular rights, were altogether undefined, among a people on whom were gradually dawning, through the medium of the Reformation, and the perverted views of the ultra-reforming and fanatical Puritans, the principles of constitutional liberty, and the fixed determination to uphold it, as the inalienable birthright of every Englishman.

His second was his false and detestable education under the doctrines of that subtle Scottish sophist, his abominable father, the first James, who instilled into him, from his earliest youth, his own favorite doctrine, that the best, the wisest, and most royal way of governing a people is by cheating them ; a way

of governance which he exultingly termed *kingcraft*, not in contempt as men now speak of priestcraft, but as a term of high and honorable import. Added to this, he taught him, ever and anon, that a people has no rights, nor an individual member of the people; and that a king has no duties except to govern, well if it like him, if not, ill—only to govern *de jure divino*. The last, and most fatal of all his lessons, which he inculcated so steadily upon him that it seems to have taken ineradicable root in his mind, was that no faith was required from a king to his subjects.

His last was his own infirmity of character. Principles, to use the term correctly, Charles appears to have had none—unless we may call his attachment to the established church, and his unquestionable religious character, by this title. Settled opinions and rooted habits he had many, and these, with many men, are apt to pass for principles; and of these, strengthened by his natural obstinacy, and confirmed yet further by opposition, we are inclined to regard his adherence to the church, through good report and ill, through life and unto death, as one, and undoubtedly the best and truest.

Sincere in his religion, in all things else he was habitually, by education, and we think by hereditary temperament, the most insincere of men. To friends and to enemies he was alike untrue and faithless. The former could never rely on his protection, the latter could never put trust in his most solemn asseverations.

Obstinate and unyielding to the last against the advice of the best and wisest of his friends, where concession would have been wisdom; wherever resistance to the end became the right and only course of conduct, he was invariably found vacillating, weak, infirm of purpose.

Had he been obstinate in the right, when the head of the

noble Stafford was demanded at his hands, the only pilot who could have steered the ship of royalty safe through the tempest of Puritan democracy, he never had lost his crown, or bowed his own head to that block on which he sacrificed the bravest and most able of his counsellors.

Had he been timely wise, and listened to conditions, when the last fight had been fought at Long Marston, "never," to use the words of Sir John Berkeley, perhaps the wisest of his late advisers—"never would crown so nearly lost have been regained on terms so easy." But it was not so written; and the eye even of the most blinded follower of loyalty must perceive that it was good, both for the peoples and the princes, yea, and for the world, the human race at large, that King Charles I. should perish on the block; that his power, if not his crown, should fall on the head of that most royal-minded of plebeians, who swayed England's sceptre as none of her kings, save perhaps Elizabeth, ever swayed it; and who did more than ever man did for the development of that great race, then starting on its vast, sublime career of war and commerce, liberty and toleration, science in peace and victory in arms, which we misname the Anglo-Saxon; and which, so surely as the great sun stands still, and the earth travels round it, shall girdle the globe from east again to east, and cover it from pole to pole, until no prayer shall mount to God but in the accents of the English tongue.

If there be one man of men whom England and America should unite to venerate, it is that hard, morose, rude Oliver, who secured for the Ocean Isle that position among European nations which she still maintains, that pre-eminence upon the seas which secured to virgin America the glorious privilege of being Anglo-Saxon and progressive, rather than Dutch or Spanish, and degenerating still into the last abyss of inanition.

The limits of our narrative preclude, of course, the possibility of our sketching, with the briefest pen, the consecutive events in council and in field which signalized the greatest and most durable of revolutions; the watch-cry and trophy of which were Privilege of Parliaments and the Bill of Rights; and the effects of which still endure in the civil freedom and religious liberty, in the maintenance of governmental powers, and the independence of individual rights peculiar to the genuine free politics of England and the United States, as contrasted to the spurious and bastard combination of despotic and anarchical principles which signalize the sham republics of all other races.

In the first instance, perhaps, the Parliament, and the Commons more especially, manifested a want of confidence, and, still more, a want of liberality, in granting necessary supplies to the king, which circumstances, up to that time, would scarcely appear to have warranted. But, ere long, the king manifested his true intentions, and came out under his genuine colors. To levy taxes by his own arbitrary imposition, to govern England of his own will, wholly dispensing with the use of Parliaments altogether, was the scheme of Charles I., ably carried into effect for a time by Thomas Wentworth, the able, haughty, and unhappy Earl of Strafford, and, as united to the suppression of all other churches save that of England only, comprehensively embodied by him in the singular term, "*thorough*."

How Hampden, Pym, St. John, the elder Vane, Eliot, and other noble spirits strove, suffered, and, in the end, triumphed, for the liberties of England, history has told trumpet-tongued with all her spirit-kindling echoes; but few know the fact that, in the House of Commons, even so early as the petition for the bill of rights, and the subsequent remonstrance, Oliver Cromwell was already a man of mark; in council, it is probable, not oratory; for he never became a fluent or powerful speaker,

even when his accents were heard from the protectoral chair; and he seems, like Talleyrand in after days, to have regarded language as a special gift for the concealment of thought.

On the eventful evening of the carrying of the Remonstrance, on which the debate was waged with such fury that many of the elder and sager members presaged an armed conflict and bloodshed—for gentlemen in those days habitually, as of their right, wore swords—when the members were leaving the house, a gentleman asked John Hampden, pointing to Oliver, who, by the way, was Hampden's cousin, "Who is that slovenly, ill-dressed fellow?" To which the great, pure patriot replied, "That sloven, should this controversy between the king and commons be carried to the appeal of arms, which may God forbid, I say to you, that sloven will be the greatest man in England."

And John Hampden was no indifferent judge in such matters; nor, though he did not live to see it, was he mistaken in the issue. But he lived not to see it; and, had he lived, it is probable that he would have resisted, unto the death, the usurping ambition of the Great Independent, even as he resisted the usurped prerogative of the lawful king.

But John Hampden fell, shot to the death through the left shoulder with three bullets, at the head of his own regiment of Buckinghamshire volunteers, on the sad field of Chalgrove, the purest and most moderate of patriots.

And, shortly afterwards, at Newbury, fell Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, of whom Clarendon has recorded that, although conscience and patriotism compelled him to take up arms and to do battle for the king, he was ever from that moment wont, even in the company of his most intimate friends, to fall into deep fits of melancholy musing, and to ingeminate, with shrill and touching accents, the word, *peace, peace*. He fell, the

purest and most moderate of royalists ; and, thenceforth, purity seemed dead, and moderation likewise, on both sides, and the mortal sword, as ever, was the arbiter.

It was to the great insight of Oliver Cromwell into the minds of men—for he early discerned that some new spirit must be aroused in the minds of men to counterbalance the antique chivalry and loyalty among the “decayed tapsters and pimple-nosed serving-men,” of whom, by his own allegation, the bulk of the parliamentary armies were composed—that the ultimate victory of the parliament must be ascribed.

To meet this spirit of chivalry, he awakened the spirit of militant religion ; and, as ever must be the case when the religion of the masses becomes militant, as in the crusades, as in the Huguenot wars of France, and as in his own case especially, with it, his own creation, he overrode the oldest monarchy, the most sublime and stately hierarchy, the noblest and most puissant aristocracy of Europe ; he overrode, secondly, the Parliament of England ; he overrode, in the last place, though in our opinion wisely, justly, and for the preservation of his country from the worse curse of fanatical intolerance and social anarchy, the liberties of England herself, and made himself, all but in name, the mightiest and wisest of her kings.

Charles died on the scaffold, by the connivance rather than by the act of Cromwell. Prevented it, assuredly he might have done ; but, preventing, must himself have perished ; for Charles could not be trusted. Oliver would have spared him once, nay, but reinstated him ; but the fatal discovery of a genuine letter, wherein the fated king assured his queen that “for those knaves,” meaning Essex and Cromwell, “to whom he had promised a silken garter, he had in lieu of it a hempen halter,” sealed his fate thenceforth for ever.

The scabbard was cast away between them, and in the strife

of swords, as ever must be the case, the weaker went to the wall. Charles the First died to be pitied as a private man, to be deplored by the church of which he was a faithful son, but certainly not regretted as a king, for he was clearly in intent a traitor and tyrant; yet can it not be said of him, as it was of Julius Cæsar, "*Jure cæsus habeatur!*"—Let him be held justly slain!—for, in the English constitution, from time immemorial, there is no rule or precedent by which a king can be brought to trial by his subjects.

Still, he had not much reason for complaint; during his whole life he had sacrificed to *expediency* only, not to justice, or to the rights of man, or to his oaths before God; and himself to *expediency* he fell a royal victim. He fell by the axe on the scaffold at Whitehall, and Heaven had no thunders by which to bruit aloud its indignation or its horror at his fall.

By his death, he aroused again the spirit of aggrieved loyalty to arms, and fatal Dunbar, bloody Worcester, the great usurper's "crowning mercy," proved how gallant and true was the heart of the English gentry, proved how ineffectual and vain is gallantry or truth, is heart and hand, against the iron bands of discipline, against the leadership of a leader competent to govern the energies and point the enthusiasm of his men.

When Cromwell flung his arm aloft, amid the sun-burst through the mist which revealed his enemies rushing down at the bidding of their frenzied preachers to "do battle at Armageddon," and shouted, in his massive tones, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered!" he showed himself a captain among captains. The far-famed "sun of Austerlitz" is trite and tame beside that glorious battle-word. When he drove, ignominiously, the "Rump" of the Long Parliament from the station which it had so long misused, from domination over a nation which it had so long misgoverned; when he bade his obedient

Ironsides "carry away that bauble," he proved himself a braver and more consistent patriot than when he thundered upon the flank of the half-victorious cavaliers at Marston, and conquered the reeling fight; than when he fought bareheaded in the van of the last deadliest *mêlée* of Naseby; than when he dared to sign the death-warrant of his hapless king.

When he once sat upon the throne—for which he had played, as some men will have it, so foully, though we cannot regard it as so altogether—he used that usurped power solely for England's good and England's glory; he wore, if not a crown, "a more than dictatorial wreath," conquered, indeed, by might, but affixed by mercy.

The worst blot on his name is the deeds which have rendered that name, to this day, *a curse* in Ireland; but it must be remembered that he was dealing with men whom he regarded as murderers and heathens, and deeming himself probably the God-ordained avenger of protestant and pious blood.

His greatest glory is Spain humbled, Holland overcome, Scotland and Ireland pacified, the colonies planted, the navigation act passed, the maritime glory of England, the Anglo-Saxonism of North America secured. These are his high glories—glories enough for the greatest. They should secure him immortality among men—may they secure him pardon before God!

When he died, the greatest tempest on record—until that kindled tempest which scourged the earth when Napoleon, the second Cromwell, was departing from his scene of mingled crime and glory—devastated Europe from the Baltic to Cape Bon, from the Bosphorus to the Bay of Biscay, uptearing trees, upheaving hills, unroofing houses, killing both man and beast in the open field, with one continuous glare of lightning, one roll of continuous thunder.

And, as the death hours of these, the two greatest of usurpers,

were thus similar, so were their last words strikingly alike. Cromwell, having lain senseless for above an hour, started to consciousness at a tremendous thunderclap, and exclaimed, "Ordnance!" Napoleon, transported by the din of elemental strife into the strife of men, muttered the words, "*tête d'armée*," and passed into that world where the drum hath no sound and the sword is edgeless.

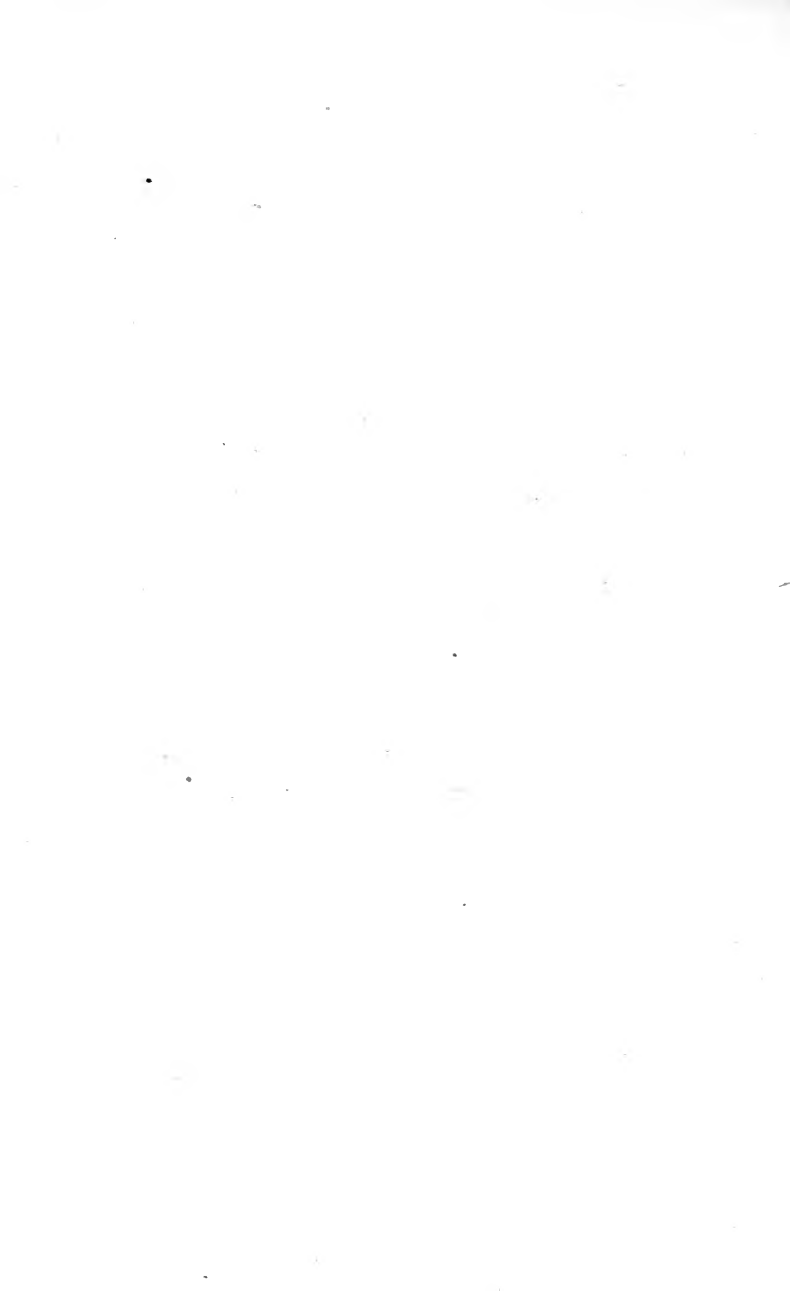
Both were great in their day; both were guilty; but both were instruments of the God who made them, not for evil, but unto good. It is for Him alone to judge them, as it is His alone to show mercy. *Requiescant!*



Charlotte de la Tremouille,

COUNTESS OF DERBY.

1651.



CHARLOTTE DE LA TREMOUILLE, COUNTESS OF DERBY.

THE Countess of Derby may well be pronounced one of the noblest, greatest, and most heroical women that England or the world ever has produced. I write England advisedly; for, although she was a Frenchwoman by birth, and that of the very highest rank short of royalty, being a daughter of the princely house of La Tremouille—it was still in England that all her great exploits were performed—all her extraordinary qualities displayed; and as she was married in very early youth to the gallant and noble Derby, nearly, indeed, at the same period when his royal master, Charles I., espoused the beautiful daughter of the last hero-king of France, Henry, the Bearnois of Navarre, it is not unnatural to conclude that it was in her adopted, rather than her native country, that she learned those lessons of strong persistency, cool endurance, and patient fortitude, which would appear in all ages to have been characteristic rather of the English than of the French temper, which is generally held to be conspicuous for impulsive gallantry and offensive valor, rather than for perseverance under the pressure of evil or iron sufferance of inevitable calamity.

Still, heroism is of no age or country—although there may

be peculiar shades or hues which appear to belong to the attributes, and to constitute, as it were, almost general traits of national character. Even in this view, however, there are discrepancies to be noted by the wise observer, which quickly show the injudiciousness of those who, from general traits, would seek to establish absolute principles, or to constitute individual actions the basis of invariable laws.

Thus, in spite of the generally prevailing notion that the French, however admirable at attack, are greatly inferior in the defence of fortified places, the most wonderful instance of endurance, under horrors of famine, pestilence, and exhaustion almost unparalleled, recorded in modern history, is the protracted resistance of Massena within the walls of Genoa, against the combined armies of Austria and fleets of England, by which, in point of fact, he neutralized all the successes of the victors, and converted defeat into triumph, by holding out until the French columns had already crossed the Alps, and thus making possible the almost miraculous campaign of Marengo.

Again, it was Charlotte de la Tremouille, who, with unparalleled feminine heroism, defended Latham House long after hope had been extinct in the hearts of the bravest of its masculine defenders, while her Lord was fighting afar off for his church and his king—who, a second time, after the noble head of Derby had fallen on the gory scaffold, last token of his adherence to that holy cause which he could uphold no longer, defended the Peel Castle in her hereditary realm of Man, fighting for the rights of her son and the hereditary dignities of his race, long after the weak unworthy monarch, Charles II., had departed a fugitive from his kingdom—and who so earned the noble praise of being the last person in all the territories, provinces, dependencies of Great Britain, who laid down arms which she had taken up for the rights, and which she resigned only—as the

sovereign of a mere mimic realm almost within gunshot of the shores of England—after Virginia, the Bermudas, Antigua, and Barbadoes had submitted to the parliament; after the sister islands of the Channel, Scilly and Guernsey, had surrendered; and the narrow seas were swept far and nigh, cutting off all supplies, and prohibiting all egress or ingress to her island fortalice, by the unrivalled fleets of Blake.

Equally heroical with that heroine of all time, the Maid of Arc, her heroism was yet of a character entirely different and distinct. The character of the latter was essentially French—French of all ages, though modified assuredly by the peculiar influences of her own era; deeply imbued with romance, full of impulsive fire, burning with generous ardor, deeply imbued with the sensibility to the call of glory, kindled at a word to the wildest enthusiasm, not unresponsive to the breath of superstitious fatalism; yet despondent when held inactive, and recovering her high courage and unflinching heroism only when actually called upon to do or to suffer.

Widely different was the noble Charlotte de la Tremouille; for of her it might have been said, as was said of the greatest man of the present day, that duty was everything and glory nothing, except endorsed as it arose incidentally from the consequence of duty done. Not in the slightest degree touched by romance as to her own secret nature, although the history of her career is in itself the wildest of romances; scarcely, if at all, influenced by impulses; a person of slender imagination and few sensibilities; superior to all superstitions; superior also to all reverses of fortune, she was greater by far in suffering than in living: and it was rather by supporting with unmoved constancy what her enemies did unto her, than by doing unto them what they might not have half so hardly supported, that she earned her undying fame and spotless reputation.

It is said, that in her younger days she was remarkable for delicate and extraordinary beauty ; if it were so, anxiety and a life harder, and exposed to vicissitudes more man-like, than are wont to break the calm tenor of female ways, early destroyed all its vestiges ; for in the magnificent painting of Vandyke, which still exists, as do those of most others of the celebrated ladies of her day, she is represented as a stout and somewhat coarse-featured matron, of middle age, richly attired, but possessing none of that refined and gentle haughtiness—if I may so express myself—which we somehow or other expect to see in the carriage and lineaments of those who, themselves great, have mingled much in the society of the great, and yet more, who have themselves been the doers of great actions.

There is none of this haughtiness, or dignity, then, call it which you will, in the air or features of Charlotte de la Tremouille ; nor is there any marked impress on her brow and lip either of deep thought and high intellect, or of brilliancy, daring, and courage almost superhuman. On the contrary, she has the air of a genuine country matron of high class, in her own age—something, one would think, of a Lady Bountiful ; apt at distilling simples and dispensing medicines to the ailing, good things to the hungry of her tenantry and neighbors ; yet this was she, who for two successive kings of England did more, held more, suffered more, and lost more than any other woman who ever drew the breath of life ; who, after the death of one monarch on the scaffold, and the despairing exile of another, for whom her noble lord had died devoted, endured the utmost of persecution from the cruel and victorious parliament—who, after the restoration of that monarch's worthless son, endured yet more from his base ingratitude than she had done from the rancor of his enemies, herself coming nigh to perishing on the same scaffold which had drunk her husband's gore,

charged by the perjured monster Oates with participation in that popish plot, which never had an existence without the brain of that most mean and odious of all murderers.

Early in the war of the commonwealth and the king, that war through the furnace and fierce ordeal of which, through so much misery to the kings, the nobles, and the people of England, was wrought out at last the wonderful edifice of her present constitution, with all its inestimable blessings—that constitution, which alone possessing the power of self-modification, can be progressive without being iconoclastic or destructive, can undergo change without fear of revolution, and therefore bids fair to be coeval with the chalk cliffs which wall its empire: early in that war, or rather, I should say, at its very commencement, the Earl of Derby had taken arms for his sovereign, believing it wiser to trust to the king, whose prerogatives were already strictly limited, whose leaning towards absolutism might be supposed to be, in a great measure, checked, and to whose encroachments all constitutional means of resistance existed, in full force, or rather reinforced and greatly strengthened by the passage of the bill of rights, and the adoption of the general remonstrance—than to submit to the self-constituted authority of the parliament, now evidently bent on wresting everything beyond the bare name of regal power from the almost helpless monarch, whose proceedings had no limit save their own consciences and their own will; and whose violence and outrage, the kingly power once gone, and the ministers of the law merely their own creatures, there was no means in the kingdom constituted for disputing legally or resisting forcibly.

Steadfastly, gallantly, he had fought to the last—nor less nobly had his countess contended, as all men know, for the defence of Latham house is history—and there are few to whom its details are not facts, as it were, of every-day allusion. How

she held out alone, with her lord afar, not fighting unwomanly with the sword, not donning the attire or buckling on the armor of a man—for heroine as she was, she saw the indelicacy and inutility alike of such procedure—but aiding, assisting, comforting, inspiring all, by the unmoved composure of her noble face, by the unvarying and placid smile with which she received all evil tidings; with which she endured all personal inconveniences and sufferings—including towards the end the want of common necessities, of bread and water to support human life. Limiting her own table to the quantity and quality allotted to the meanest sentinel; braving the hottest fire of the assailants to carry refreshments to the weary, assistance to the wounded, of the combatants; nay! as defender after defender fell slain outright or sorely wounded at his appointed station, carrying arms and ammunition, clad in her full magnificence of court attire, to any member, as they failed him, of that weak, yet invincible garrison; and in that last assault, when the ladders were reared against every bartizan and buttress, when the volleying death-shots raked every embrasure and window, when the clash and clang of broadswords on cuirass and helmet were mingled with the roar of the culverins, the sharp rattle of the musketry, and savage shouts and execrations of her combatants, standing with her maidens side by side with their defenders, and loading musketoon and harquebuss as fast as they might fire them, until all was ended.

Vainly, however, fought the earl in the field, vainly the countess in her guarded fortalice—for the good cause might not prevail, until England should have supped deeper yet of horrors, and her king should have bowed down that “grey dis-crowned head,” erewhile so fair and noble, to the base felon’s block. If Charles lost kingdom, crown, and life, Derby and his young wife lost all they had in England, princely estates,

high rank, wealth almost royal, title most exalted—all was gone save the feudal royalty of the little Isle of Man ; save the lives which both had risked so freely, one scarce had thought they valued them.

And even these they held, not as their own possessions, but as things to be devoted to the cause, to be cast self-sacrificed to the winds of heaven, to soon as the service of the king should desire it.

So for the time all was over. Hopton, the king's best leader in the west, was defeated, and his army utterly dispersed at Torrington by Fairfax. Montrose was *hors du combat*, deprived of all his men by the decisive route of Philiphaugh ; and Astley—gallant Astley—who, before the first encounter of the cavaliers and roundheads at Edgehill, knelt at the head of his lines, and prayed this short prayer memorable through all time : “O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me !” and then springing to his charger cried, “March on, boys !” and led a charge so fiery and so well sustained, that it won the day. That same Lord Astley, defeated at Stowe by Morgan, with superior forces, and himself taken prisoner, said to the parliamentarians :—“You have done your work, and may now go to play, unless you choose to fall out among yourselves !”

And in truth their work was done—and their cruel play was about to commence, which had for stakes the fortunes of a country, and the life of a king.

In the short insurrection which broke out, when the tidings were proclaimed, how that the parliament had determined to try the king by a high court of justice, and to bring him, whom they dared not murder, to the block, Derby bore no part. Ill-planned, uncombined, irregular, it had neither concert nor the chances of success—it could be fatal only to its projectors, and

fatal to them it was—for after it was shed on the scaffold the first blood that flowed during the war, save by sword, *flagrante bello*, when sword was met by sword, the blood of Lisle and Lucas and Lord Capel shamefully slaughtered—Cromwell's first deed of cruelty and shame—in spite of capitulation after Colchester.

So far from that insurrection deferring, or tending to prevent, it accelerated only the murder of the king, by harassing the apprehensions, without alarming the fears of the parliamentarians. But, as I have said, in it Derby bore no part; it was too suddenly concerted to permit him to be present, even if his military sagacity and clear political foresight would have permitted him to join so rash a rising.

But he was in no condition to have done so in any event, for so soon as he saw that for the present all was lost, he made good his retreat, rather than his escape, with his countess, her son, and the trustiest of his adherents, to the strong walls and castles of his island kingdom, which he put in order at once to make the most vigorous defence of his own rights, and to wage war for his own crown of Man, and for that of his brother king of England.*

Ireton, meanwhile, who commanded in the north for the parliament, and had a strong force afoot in Lancashire, sent him a trumpet, with a summons to surrender on good conditions, to whom the earl returned this answer of high and stern defiance.

* It must be borne in mind that this was not a mere ceremonial or nominal title; but that this Countess of Derby was received by Charles II. as “notre très chère et très puissant sœur, Reine de Man et Comtesse de Derby”—and that it is only within the memory of persons now alive, that the feudal title of kings of Man was extinguished by its cession to the crown of England, by the then Earl of Derby.

"I received your letter with indignation, and with scorn return you this answer, that I cannot but wonder whence you gather any hopes that I should prove, like you, treacherous to my sovereign; since you cannot be ignorant of my former actions in his late majesty's service, from which principles of loyalty I am no whit departed. I scorn your proffers; I disdain your favor; I abhor your treason; and am so far from delivering up this island to your advantage, that I shall keep it to the utmost of my power for your destruction. Take this for your final answer, and forbear any further solicitations: for if you trouble me with any more messages of this nature, I will burn the paper, and hang up the messenger. This is the immutable resolution, and shall be the undoubted practice of him who accounts it his chiefest glory to be his majesty's most loyal and obedient subject.

"DERBY."

Scarce had these stirring and memorable lines flowed from the pen of the brave and noble cavalier, before he was again called to prove in the field that indomitable loyalty, for which his race was so nobly conspicuous.

The Second Charles, proclaimed by his Scottish subjects, who had revolted against the grim intolerance and fanaticism of the independents, had remained well nigh two years in their camp, rather indeed a prisoner than a king, but had still, in spite of the fatal defeat at Dunbar, maintained his position as monarch, and kept up his own hopes and those of his well-wishers, of one day recovering his English crown. And now, at length, had the day arrived. Profiting by a false movement of Cromwell, who, being pressed for supplies, was compelled to leave the way into England open to the Scots, he rushed down, high of hope, into the centre of his native realm, trusting to rally on himself all the stout cavaliers of the northern and the midland counties,

and by a daring stroke to master the metropolis before Oliver could retrace his steps, or come up with his rear.

But little knew he of the giant with whom he had to do.

Rapidly he marched southward, but tardily and feebly came in the levies of the cavaliers. Defeat and death had thinned their numbers, had tamed their high, hot blood, had rendered them, although brave as ever, hopeless and averse to further struggles. Sequestrations and confiscations had narrowed their resources; their plate, their silver candlesticks and posset dishes, had been melted down in the late king's service; their trusty war-horses were dead or aged; their gallant sons were dead on the field or on the scaffold; their brave tenants were decimated, and the survivors given to other masters. Never have men so fought, so bled, so suffered for any cause or king, as have the cavaliers of England for that most lamentable and disastrous house of Stuart—never have men met with such ingratitude.

Levies and men came in slowly—but at the first trumpet call, the foot of Derby was in the stirrup, the blue scarf of the king upon his breast, the king's black feather in his hat—he left his castle to the keeping of his noble wife, and as he kissed her proud fair brow at parting—"It may be," he said, "that we shall meet no more on earth, but we shall meet in heaven! Mourn not for me, therefore, Charlotte, if I fall, but be strong and brave in duty."

And she replied, "Do but your duty, and I will not mourn, save in the secret heart; and when you are saint in heaven, look you down on us, and see if I do not mine."

His race was soon run, and his days numbered. His small detachment cut off and overpowered at Wigan Lane, he still made good his way to Worcester, and fought there the last desperate fight for Charles; nor when that day was lost, stern Cromwell's crowning mercy, did he desert his king, but saw him

placed in safety, before he thought, too late, of his own preservation.

A skirmish, a prisoner—a court-martial, a convicted culprit—a block and a martyr—that was the last of Derby.

She heard, but wept not, nor despaired, but did her duty, mourning in the secrecy of her heart only.

Until not one English flag, save of the commonwealth alone, was flying, she held out her island fortalice, and so stern had been her defence, so great was their fear of her desperation, that the parliament, on the surrender of her strongholds and her submission to their usurping government, permitted her to retain her estates, and enjoy their revenues, and she dwelt there, educating her orphan son, as such a mother only can educate a man; adored by her islanders, respected by Englishmen in general, and unmolested, if unreverenced, by the parliamentary chiefs, until the restoration of King Charles II. renewed her persecutions, and perhaps brought her nearer to the block than the worst enmity of his enemies.

She escaped all the perils of the pretended plot; bore all her sufferings to the last, as she had borne the first; returned to her island home, not the least instance of the ingratitude of kings, lived in perpetual weeds for her lost lord—and died a good wife, a good mother, a good mistress, a good subject—truly a heroine of all time, and conspicuous on the page of history, as the last lady that has levied war, or that shall levy war again for ever within the kingdom of Great Britain.



The King's Gratitude,

OR,

KING CHARLES II. AND HIS COURT.

1682.



THE KING'S GRATITUDE ;

OR, KING CHARLES II. AND HIS COURT.

CHAPTER I.

SIR REGINALD BELLARMYNE, AN OLD SOLDIER OF THE KING'S.

It was on a fine sunshiny morning of September, 1653, that Sir Reginald Bellarmyne sat by the wide hearth of the summer parlor, which he occupied when there were no guests, as was for the most part now the case in the once hospitable cloisters of Bellarmyne Abbey.

A small round table at his elbow displayed the relics of a large hare-pasty—it would have been venison in the good days of old ; and, in lieu of stoups of Malvoisie and Bourdeaux wine, a solitary silver tankard thrust forward its capacious womb, mantling with stout English ale recently stirred with the sprig of rosemary, then held to impart a sovereign relish to the substantial joint ; nor did it appear, from the inroads the good baronet had made on the contents of both, that his appetite had suffered seriously from the retrenchment of luxuries which he had, perhaps, once deemed necessities to his rank and station. He was a man of sixty years or upwards, who must at a former

period of his life, have been eminently handsome, and who still retained in his erect form, clear eye, and nobly cast features, many traces of the beauty for which he had once been celebrated, even in the courts of the great and famous monarch. He had, however, grown of latter years somewhat ponderous and corpulent; and his sinister leg wrapped in flannels, and bolstered up on an easy stool, gave painful evidence of that distemper which is held to visit upon the children the pleasant indulgences of their forefathers. Otherwise, Sir Reginald's appearance showed no token of those excesses which were unfortunately so much in vogue, in those days, among the cavaliers and courtiers of the king, as to be regarded almost one of their characteristics. His eye was clear and calm, his complexion pale rather than flushed; and his frame, though somewhat unwieldy, was well-knit, and still capable, when he was not laboring under the attacks of the ancestral enemy, of both effort and exertion.

His hair, which he still wore long and unpowdered, not having adopted the new-fashioned abomination of the periwig, was, indeed, very grey; his brow was deeply wrinkled; and there was a singular expression, weary and wasted, yet intelligent and keen withal, and full of eager energy, pervading all the lines of his face, which seemed to tell a history of cares, and troubles, and anxieties—perhaps of almost mortal sorrows—encountered, resisted, combated inch by inch as a man should combat such things, if not vanquished by him.

He was dressed at all points as became a gentleman, in an age when the distinctive garb of the different classes was maintained in all strictness, and when scarcely an article of wearing apparel was common to the nobly born, and to the next beneath him in station; but yet so dressed that it was evidently rather a matter of etiquette and self-respect than of convenience with

him to maintain the outward show of his family. His doublet of uncut velvet was rather suited for the field sports, or out-door occupations, than for the full morning-dress of a country gentleman of the day; yet it was evident from the ruffles at wrist and knee, from the neat russet-leather buskins, and the long rapier, with its ornamental shoulder-belt, that he wore it as his habitual and distinctive attire.

A slouched grey hat, with a drooping feather, and a dark-green roquelaure lay neatly folded and brushed on a slab hard by, together with a crutch-headed cane mounted with a fine red-deer's antler, and a pair of fringed buckskin gloves, that would have reached well-nigh to the elbow of the wearer.

A noble deer greyhound, of the great Scottish breed, and of the largest size, long of limb, long of muzzle, wire-haired, with deep, earnest hazel eyes, lay on the deer-skin which covered the hearth-stone, gazing into the face of his master with almost superhuman intelligence; while a couple of smaller dogs, fine curly-fleeced water-spaniels, dozed closer to the embers of the wood-fire, which the autumnal atmosphere, and the thick walls of the ancient abbaye, rendered anything rather than unpleasant. The parlor itself in which he sat showed, like its master, something at least of privation, if not of absolute poverty; the old oak wainscoting, indeed, was as brightly polished; the old high-backed chairs and settles, with their quaint carvings and old tapestried cushions, were as free from any speck of mould; the antique suits of steel-armor on the walls were as clear from rust; the modern implements of falconry or the chase were in as accurate order and arrangement as if a hundred zealous hands were daily employed in furbishing them. Still there was nothing gay, nothing lightsome, nothing new; nothing in all the furniture or decorations of the room which did not wear a wan and faded aspect, as if they had been coeval at least with

their aged possessor; and as if, like him, they had seen their better days.

Without, so far as could be seen from the large oriel window, the stone mullions of which were so much overrun with clustering ivy and woodbines as to indicate some slackness on the gardener's part, things did not, on the whole, wear a more promising or brighter aspect. The fine elm avenue, which wound away for above a mile, in full view, a broad belt of massive verdure, had grown all out of shape and rule; the great boughs of many of the trees sweeping so low as to render the road impassable to carriages, and difficult even to travellers on horseback. The lawn, immediately around the house, which had in its palmier days been so neatly shorn and rolled, and decorated with trim clumps of evergreens, and marble urns and statues, was all grown up with coarse, long grass, among which the hares and rabbits fed boldly as unscared by man; and the wild park beyond, with all its sunny fern-clad knolls, and rich sheltered hollows so closely pastured of old by the graceful herds of fallow deer, showed but a wide expanse of rank untended vegetation, stocked with no denizens more aristocratical than a flock of ragged-looking, black-faced, mountain-muttons, a score of little sharp-horned kyloe oxen, and two or three queer-visaged Shetland ponies, not much larger and much more ragged than the moorland sheep with which they kept company.

The fish-ponds, one or two of which were visible among the trees, scarcely gleamed blue, unless in casual spots, under the bright sky of autumn, so thickly were they overspread with water-grass and the green, slimy duckweed; the gravel road before the door was matted with weeds, as if no wheel-track had disturbed it for years.

All was a picture of neglect and desolation, yet beautiful withal, from the very wildness and liberty of the unchecked

vegetation, and the frequency of those unusual sounds, so seldom heard in the close vicinity of the abodes of men—the incessant cooings of the hoarse woodpigeons, the crow of the cock-pheasants from the garden walks, the harsh half-barking bleat of the moorland sheep, and, most rarely heard of all, the deep booming of the bitterns from the stagnant morass, into which the fish-ponds were fast degenerating.

It was not difficult, though sad it was, either to understand or to explain. Sir Reginald Bellarmyne, of Bellarmyne Abbey, a baronet and a catholic, as long as there had been catholics or baronets in England, loyalist and royalist, like all his fellows, had in his own person, and in that of his fathers before him, fought always on the wrong king's side, so far as fortune was concerned, whatever might be said of fidelity.

One ancestor had perished on Crook-back Richard's side, at Bosworth; his grandson, and Sir Reginald's grandfather, had fallen under the heavy censure of the man-hearted queen, Elizabeth, and escaped narrowly with life, for Scottish Mary's sake. The baronet's own father, most unjustly, as they ever averred, was mulcted thirty thousand pounds after the gunpowder affair of Fawkes, with which they denied all participation; and himself, as he most undisguisedly proclaimed, had fought for King Charles on every stricken field from Edgehill to Worcester fight; and when all was lost, had followed the fortunes of his son in foreign lands, and melted his last ounce of plate to support the needy parasites of the discrowned and exiled king.

Mulcts, confiscations, forfeitures, in past reigns, had done much; the sequestrations under the parliament, for confirmed and inveterate malignancy, all but completed the ruin of that old, honorable family, as true and as English as the old oaks of Bellarmyne. The last forfeiture would have completed it altogether, but that, by a strange chance, the abbey, and a part of

the estates immediately attached to it, being entailed most strictly on the male heirs of the name for ever, an unknown, and almost unsuspected cousin of the late Sir Armytage Bellarmyne, turned up in the very nick of time, in the shape of a city merchant, and a friend of some among the powers that were, after *justice* had been done on the "Man of Blood," as they termed it. He interposed the claim of himself and his son, who was serving at the time under Lockhart against the Spaniards at Dunkirk; thereby preventing the alienation of the property, which was sorely coveted by a puritan drysalter of the West Riding, from the old name of the feudal tenure.

No sequestration occurred, therefore, of the last demesnes of the House of Bellarmyne; and, at the Restoration, the old, battered, widowed cavalier returned, with one daughter, who had been educated in a French convent—his only son, the promise of his race, had fallen, a boy of fifteen, fighting like a man by his side at Worcester—to all that now remained of the once broad possessions; the old abbey, a world too wide for the shrunken acres that now alone looked up to its time-honored belfries.

The city cousin, the Bellarmyne of London, like an honest man and a good Christian as he was, though a heretic in the parlance of Rome—and a true gentleman, although he smacked a little of the puritan—had ever remitted the rents of the abbey to Sir Reginald, whom he constantly acknowledged, though he had never seen him, as the head of the house during the whole period of his exile; and, on the restoration of King Charles II., to which, with others of the eminent London merchants, he had largely contributed, made over to him, as a matter of right, and of course, and in no wise as a favor, the mansion and the remnant of the lands, somewhat neglected, indeed, and out of order, but neither dilapidated nor exhausted.

It is, perhaps, to be regretted that, at this time, no personal meeting occurred between the kinsmen, for they were both men of high character, high minds, and correct feelings; but having had no intercourse, each had probably in some sort conceived of the other, something of the character ascribed to his political party. The protestant merchant took it too much, and as it proved wrongfully, for granted, that the old cavalier and inveterate swordsman was more or less the rash, reckless, rakehellly debauchee and rioter of his day and class; and contented with having done justice, thought no more about the matter, nor troubled himself about his cousin, or his affairs.

The old soldier, more naturally, after he had acknowledged frankly the honorable conduct of his unknown kinsman, and expressed his sense of obligation, shrank from anything that could savor of intrusion, or a desire of establishing any sort of claim or clientelage on his rich and powerful relation. It is probable that something might have added to this delicacy, in the shape of the cavalier's distaste to the puritan, the romanist's aversion to the heretic, and, yet more, of the soldier's distrust and prejudice against the trader.

Still, none of these motives were very strong—for it was well known that Nicholas Bellarmyne of the city, though neutral throughout, and, at the commencement of the troubles, inclined more to the parliament, had never joined the independents, much less identified himself with the regicides. Sir Reginald himself, moreover, though a catholic, was such rather because he would not abjure the creed of his fathers than that he had anything in him of the persecutor; and he had seen so much, in the Low Countries, of the noble merchants of those days, when merchants *were* men of patriotism, intelligence, and honor, that he was unusually free from the prejudices of the noble against the trader caste.

Neither of the two, in fact, knew much of the circumstances or character of the other; and neither was, at this time, even aware that his distant kinsman was a father, though from his energy in the matter of the entail, Sir Reginald might suspect that the merchant had some further representative.

On his diminished estates, then, which barely now gave returns sufficient for the maintenance of himself and his child, with a household the most limited, and on the narrowest scale compatible with his rank and name, Sir Reginald settled himself quietly, afar from the tumult, the dissipation, and the heartlessness of courts; perceiving at once that he had nothing to expect from the gratitude or generosity, much less from the justice of the sovereign, whose seal and sign-manual he held, as well as that of his unhappy father, for sums advanced as loans, the repayment of which would have more than redeemed all the recent losses of the Bellarmynes, and enabled them to resume their appropriate station in the country.

Had he been alone in the world, it is more than probable that Sir Reginald would have resigned himself contentedly to his diminished circumstances, and would have ultimately sunk, more or less graciously, and with more or less repining, into the condition of the fox-hunting, ale-consuming squire of the day, something above the farmer, but far from equal to the country gentleman of England. The great nobles who in past reigns, up to the unfortunate days of the unhappy Stuarts, had been used to live on their own estates, in their viceregal castles, during ten months of the year, holding *cour-plenière* of the lesser gentry, and collecting around them the intelligence, the civilization, and the splendor of their several shires, no longer lived—like their forefathers—independent nobles on their own hereditary principalities.

During the troublous times, which had scarcely passed over,

most of them wandering as exiles in foreign lands, France more especially, they had contracted the false and pernicious usage of abandoning their demesnes and rural residences to bailiffs and intendants; and wasting profligate, dishonorable, useless lives about the precincts of the royal court; parasites of kings; loungers at the Exchange; gamblers at Tonbridge Wells or Newmarket; fribblers and coxcombs, almost as free from any manly vice, as from any grace or virtue.

At this time England had lost entirely that strong and living feature of her social and political character—her rural aristocracy, the greatest men of the land living among and with their people, as if themselves of the people; and regarded rather by the throne in the light of allied or kindred princes than as mere subjects—much less as mere flatterers and courtiers.

From the accession of King James the First to the death of Queen Anne, England was virtually Frenchified; she had no longer a great nobility, but she had in lieu of it a little *noblesse* of the court clique, of favorites of the great man, of favorites of the bad woman of the day.

The lodgings of the metropolis were crowded with great lords, crouching and crawling, and doing unutterable basenesses at the feet of a minister, whose grandfathers their grandfathers would have hung from their battlements!—the country was deserted to rude boors, drunken ignoramus squires, time-serving, grotesque parsons, who thought it an advancement to marry the lady-of-the-manor's waiting-woman.

Coxcomby, profligacy, infidelity, insolvency, false refinement, and favoritism at court, had reflected themselves in grossness, ignorance, brutality, and want of all refinement in the country. In the reign of Charles II. there was scarce a gentleman in all England; and if there were one, he was something out of place, ridiculous, and obsolete, without honor at court, or influence in

the country. And such, in sooth, was Sir Reginald Bellarmyne.

CHAPTER II.

MISTRESS ROSAMOND BELLARMYNE; A MAID-OF-HONOR OF THE
QUEEN'S.

It would have been a difficult thing, even in England, that land of female loveliness, to find a brighter specimen of youthful beauty than was presented by Rosamond Bellarmyne, when she returned to her home, then in her sixteenth year, after witnessing the joyful procession of the 29th of May, which terminated in the installation of the son in that palace of Whitehall from which his far worthier father had gone forth to die.

She was a perfect type, in a word, of the most purely English type of insular beauty. A trifle above the middle height of women, her shape was exquisitely formed, so fully yet so delicately developed that it never occurred to the spectator to ask himself whether she was taller or shorter, plumper or slenderer, than the average of her sex. Her complexion was that of her native isle, pure as the drifted snow, yet with a rich undertone of warm health showing itself, like the light within an alabaster lamp, in an equable and genial glow, not fitfully or in electric flashes. Her large, well opened eyes were of the darkest shade of blue, yet full of the quickest and most mirthful light; so that, when her lips smiled, her eyes anticipating them appeared to overflow their dark lashes with silent laughter. Features are not describable; nor could any description give even a faint idea of the varied expression of her rich beauty, or of the exceeding fasci-

nation of her smile. Yet it was in her expression more especially that lay the charm of Rosamond Bellarmyne; and those who knew her the best asserted that her expression figured forth, and that not darkly, the character of her mind and genius.

When she arrived in England and took possession with her father of the old abbey, one thing at least was evident to all beholders, that neither a life spent abroad—for she could scarcely lip her native tongue when she left the land of her birth—nor six years of convent discipline had availed anything to denationalize her, whether in outward show or in inward spirit.

She was from top to toe an English girl; English no less in her faults and failings than in her solid and sterling excellences. Frank and fearless, truthful and free-spoken, she would at times push these brave qualities hard on towards the verge beyond which they cease to be virtues. Conscious of no wrong thought, and confident of her own strong will and pure intent, she gave perhaps too little heed to the opinion of others, even when such might have been worth consulting. Nor, speaking as she was wont to do constantly on the first rightful impulse, did it fail to occur frequently that she spoke thoughts aloud which better had been left unspoken. And doing things unadvisedly, or against advice, for she would listen to none whom she did not both love and respect, she often did what she repented.

Such was the heiress of the broken fortunes of Bellarmyne, when the restoration of the king to his own, restored her father, with many another storm and battle-beaten cavalier, to the possession of his old impoverished demesnes; and in the two years which ensued previous to the marriage of Charles with the Infanta, little occurred to alter, however the lapse of time might tend to mature, her person and her mind.

Entirely deprived of female society of her own rank, and

indeed of intercourse with her own sex beyond a staid, demure personage who had been her mother's chamber-woman, and a gay French girl from Provence, she had learned no conventional lessons of etiquette, much less of courtliness or worldly prudence, among the sequestered hills and dales of the West-Riding of Yorkshire in which Bellarmyne abbey was situated; but, on the contrary, had become more and more the child of nature, high-souled, intelligent, affectionate, docile to gentle spiritings, and easily amenable to reason, but quick of impulse, firm of purpose, and utterly ungovernable by mere formulas and maxims.

It is not strange that Sir Reginald, deprived of the means of maintaining his own station, and associating with his own equals in his county—a deprivation to which his habits of endurance in the field, and with the foreigners, might in some sort have inured himself—should have been liable to deep solicitude, nay, even to dark despondency, when he looked upon this creature, endowed with everything that should fit her to grace the world, condemned to absolute seclusion, or, desperate alternative, the worse than rude society of the Ghyls.

A lady of the highest and most delicate culture, of the most refined tastes and accomplishments, who, in so much as she had mingled yet in the great world, had been familiar with the first personages of the first European court, that of the magnificent Louis XIV., what could she have in common with the yeoman farmers of the fells and dales, or with such simple-hearted untaught hoydens as their wives or sisters? What could he do for her, himself living—what should become of her, when, in his season, he should have passed away and perished, like the leaves of his own oak trees in November? Such thoughts, far more than the gloom of gathering years, more than the twilight of his waning fortunes, more than the imminence of

pressing poverty, had darkened the brow and saddened the heart of the failing but yet unbroken veteran.

It was, therefore, with feelings near akin to delight, that, within a few months after the marriage of the king to Catharine of Portugal, the baronet received a grand and wordy epistle from a remote kinswoman, the widow of a noble earl—his school-boy friend, fellow-Oxonian, fellow-soldier through the fierce conflicts of civil war, dead by his side on the bloody field of Naseby—who had never wholly forgotten her own distant cousin, or the near friend of her lost lord.

This estimable lady, who, unhappily gifted with a son too well adapted to the court, and too well liked by the facile king, had never descended to the frivolities of the restored monarchy, but resided afar off in her jointure house, in Cornwall, possessed yet some influence, both of herself, and through her son the favorite, within the precincts of Whitehall.

The time had not yet arrived when to possess such influence was in itself almost a brand of infamy.

Cognizant of the extremity to which were reduced the fortunes of Bellarmyne, and expecting, with all the English world, that the marriage of the monarch would establish decorum at least and decency in the court of England's king, the Countess of Throckmorton had exerted her influence, and that successfully, in procuring for the beautiful Rosamond an appointment as one of the queen's maids-of-honor; securing to her, in addition to a small salary and apartments in the palace, an introduction into the first society of the realm, and an establishment on the most unquestionable footing, as it should seem, both of propriety and honor.

Still it may be thought that the lady doubted, though it did not so strike the sturdy old loyalist Sir Reginald—who would as soon have thought of doubting the moral integrity of the king

as of disputing his divine right to the crown—for her letter was long, verbose, involved, and not altogether so unquestioning or hilarious in its tone as was the response of the old cavalier.

Since it had pleased heaven, it ran, that in lieu of a son to the house of Bellarmyne, whom it would have been an easy matter to help to advancement in aid of his own honorable efforts, to give her cousin a weak girl only, who so far from helping to restore the fortunes of the house, could not even be expected to help, in any considerable degree, herself—and whereas she, the countess, feared, and was sore grieved to think, that Sir Reginald could scarce have the means—without even looking forward to advancing her young cousin Rosamond, or settling her in due season in marriage in her proper station—wherewithal to bring up the child conformably to her degree, it might not be amiss to bestow her for a time in the servitude of her most gracious majesty, who was esteemed to be a most gentle and kind-hearted lady, and withal, of the true church.

And, thereafter, the various privileges, immunities, and advantages of the position being duly and appreciatingly recorded, many sage points of advice were intermingled; many hints as to the dangers, the temptations, the *insidiæ* to honor and virtue incidental to court life were not obscurely added; the principal reliance of the countess appeared to rest on the character, not merely for *sagesse* in the French meaning of the term, but for candor, stability, and persistency which she had learned—by what means it was not stated—that Rosamond possessed, and not on any safeguards she must expect to find in her new situation.

She advised her cousin Reginald to weigh the matter well within himself, and to consult with Mistress Rosamond, concealing from her nothing of the frivolities, and baseness, and wickedness of the court, and of her own especial liability to perils and temptations, before accepting the offer.

Nor did he perceive anything, in the prospective of circumstances and the reasonable chances of life, as eligible, or even *less* eligible, so it were honorable and secure, did she counsel him to be in haste to accept the offer.

For the rest, should he judge it for the best to do so, she prayed humbly and hopefully that it should turn out for the best here and hereafter; and so, with kind recollections to pretty Mistress Rosamond—who, she heard, was in truth *pretty* Mistress Rosamond—and begging her to wear the carcanet, inclosed herewith, in memory of her loving kinswoman and godmother, she remained ever, until death, his dutiful and regardful cousin and friend, not forgetful of the past,

GUENDOLEN THROCKMORTON.

But save the news itself, all was thrown away on the stout Yorkshire baronet. The promotion was, to his honest, trustful soul, as honorable as it was in a worldly view acceptable—less an advantage than a distinction. An advancement, in short, so splendid, as far to exceed his wildest wishes.

Educated from his childhood to a belief in the divine right of kings, and in the impossibility of a son of the royal martyr doing wrong, as entire as his faith in the infallibility of his church, he would have regarded it no less treason to doubt the one, than sacrilege to question the other.

Accepting, therefore, joyously all that there was acceptable in the tidings, and pshawing, in his secret heart, at the cautions which he regarded as old womanish scruples, he wrote gratefully and with a full heart to his kinswoman, at her Cornish manor with the unpronounceable name; and, proudly communicating to Rosamond the news of her glorious prospects, set about making such preparations as the narrowness of his means permitted for sending, or conducting rather, his daughter

to her future abode under the shelter of the wing of England's royalty.

Many of the herd of Bellarmyne cattle were driven to Ripon markets, many of the ancestral oaks of Bellarmyne chase came lumbering to the earth with all their leafy honors, destined thereafter to ride, under England's red-cross flag, the briny waves, scarce salter than the tears shed by their stalwart owner, as he saw their old places vacant, and the green park dismantled of its noblest ornaments.

Even by dint of these sacrifices, little of splendor was effected in the outfit of the queen's young maid-of-honor, and when the aged baronet, presented himself at court by his old colonel the noble Duke of Ormond, had delivered up his fair child to the royal circle, and left her as a member of the household under the care—nominal care—of the mother-of-the-maids, and the real guardianship of her own delicacy and virtue, he returned alone to the ancient abbey, which was now more solitary, sadder, stiller, than ever before, to pass his old days alone, in increasing poverty, increasing infirmities, increasing despondency, and, alas! decreasing vigor and elasticity whereby to endure them.

His out-door enjoyments were now limited to an occasional day's coursing in the park, with his still choicely nurtured greyhounds, which he followed on a stout, gentle hackney; falconry and the chase had become enterprises of too much pith and moment for the war-worn cavalier; while his fireside relaxations were limited to the study of his two books, the Bible and William Shakspeare, with an occasional game of chess and a cool tankard with the vicar, and—greatest delight of all—the perusal of a letter from Rosamond, when three or four times a year the tardy and irregular post brought down the stirring news of the loud and licentious city to the quiet hills and pastoral dales of Yorkshire.

These letters for some time, until above a year had passed, were all bright and sparkling. Everything seemed to wear the *couleur de rose veritable* ; his majesty's wit, his majesty's courtesy and frank kindness ; the affectionate and genial graces of the pretty, interesting, foreign queen, the loveliness of the maids-of-honor, the *belle* Jennings, and the *belle* Hamilton, and the lovely Miss Stewart, and the merry, witty, gipsy Miss Price ; and the graces and accomplishments of the unrivalled courtiers of the day, the admirable De Grammont, and the unapproachable Anthony Hamilton, and Sedley and Etherege, and the gallant Buckhurst, and the princely Buckingham—these were the subjects of her first epistles, and their burden, that all and every one were so good-natured and so kind to her, little Rosamond Bellarmyne, that she felt herself there, in that splendid court of Whitehall, or in those merry-makings under the superb elms of Hampton court, or in those rantipole junketings at Tonbridge-Wells, or in those grand hunting matches at Newmarket, or races on Epsom Downs, every bit as much at home, every bit as safe, and almost—but no, not quite—as happy as she used to be with her birds and flowers, her pigeons and her pheasants, and her ponies, and her poor pensioners, at dear old Bellarmyne.

And the old man rejoiced and exulted as he read them ; and formed strange fancies and high hopes, hardly admitted even to himself, as he conned them over in his own mind ; and then rehearsed, in the intervals of their peaceful chess, to his good old friend Dr. Fairfax, how his little girl had been chosen to fill such or such a place in such a masque or revel ; and how the young Marquis of Ossory, or this or that more illustrious courtier, had sought her hand in some figure dance, which had been performed with such good fortune as to elicit royal approbation—and above all, how the same little girl's head was entirely proof against all the flatteries and frivolities of the great world ;

and how her heart was still in the right place, honest and true, and frank and candid ; and how, in a word, the admired and toasted, and already famous belle, Mistress Rosamond Bellarmyne, the queen's maid-of-honor, was still the same, the very same good little Rosamond, who had been the life of the old abbey, and with whose departure so much of that life had departed.

By and bye, however, the letters were changed, though the writer still seemed to be unchanged—what was said was, beyond doubt, said truly ; but much appeared to be left unsaid. There were no more praises of the maids-of-honor, no more eulogies of king and courtiers ; but much pity for the queen.

At length came mention of annoyances, almost of insults, by a person not named. It was evident even to Sir Reginald, not usually too acute, that she was unhappy, ill at ease. Sometimes he fancied that she felt herself in danger ; but he never dreamed that she concealed half her grievances, from her knowledge of his inability to aid her, and fear of his hot temper and violent resentments.

After a protracted silence, came a wild, sad, anxious letter, containing a dark tale, darkly told, of imminent peril from the same unnamed person ; of timely rescue by a young gentleman, likewise nameless—rather than a letter, it was an earnest imploring cry, to be removed from that accursed place, or ere it should be too late. And, therewith, the old man's eyes were opened, and all his dreams vanished. He would have set forth that day, that hour, to fetch her home at all risks ; but his infirmity, rendered more acute by the excitement of his mind, forbade locomotion.

So he sat in his old hall alone, as we have seen him, and chafed and fretted himself almost into madness, from consciousness of his own impotence to assist the jewel of his old heart,

and by fears for her safety, worse almost than the worst reality. One wise measure he took promptly. He wrote at length, inclosing his child's innocent appeal, to their good kinswoman of Throckmorton, praying her aid and counsel in this their extremity. Rosamond he advised of what he had done; commended her courage; praised her; and promised, as soon as his distemper would permit, to be with her in person.

A second measure, wiser yet, he took some days later; for it cost his pride many a pang, and to do it at all was a great self-conquest. He wrote to Nicholas Bellarmyne, in the city, stating the whole case—asking nothing. That done, he could no more; he waited, in darkness, for the dawn.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN BELLARMYNE; A YOUNG SOLDIER OF THE EMPEROR'S.

A beautiful autumnal day had drawn to its close some three weeks previous to the little incident which produced Rosamond's letter, and caused so much anxiety and suffering to the old cavalier; and she was sitting alone and despondent at the window of her apartment which looked over the gardens, in those days extending from the rear of the exquisite palace of Whitehall to the banks of the brimful silver river.

But she had no eyes for the shaven lawns, the tufted parterres, or the moonlighted bosom of the argent Thames; no ears for the sounds of merriment and music which came, at times, swelling on the gentle air from the returning barges of pleasure parties and homebound revellers.

She thought of herself only, of her perplexities, her trials,

her undefended situation, her offended virtue, her menaced honor.

For she had discovered, in season, both the offence and the menace; and while resenting the one, and fortifying herself against the other, had learned that, in the path of virtue, she might hope for neither encouragement among her beautiful companions, the fair, frail maids-of-honor; nor for the chivalric defence of one noble heart among the corrupt, licentious courtiers. To the king an appeal for support would have been worse than absurd; since his smiles, his encouragement, his good wishes, were all with the offender.

The queen, alas! could have given sympathy and tears only, had she chosen to give these; but, short as was the space since her espousals, she had learned already the sad lesson that, to preserve even the outward semblance of her husband's respect, she must turn a consenting eye to his foibles, and interfere with no one of his unroyal pleasures.

It was, perhaps, wonderful that—beautiful and accomplished as was Rosamond Bellarmyne; and, moreover, from her very inexperience, free-spoken as she was free-hearted—she had not been singled out before in that profligate and ungracious court for dishonorable and degrading pursuit.

But it had so happened that, when she arrived, the king himself had eyes or ears for none but *La belle Stewart*—who, by her meretricious half-consents and half-denials, kept him sighing and dangling at her knees longer than his constancy ever endured for any other maid or matron; the Duke of York, for whose gross tastes the innocent and lively Rosamond would have lacked piquancy and vice, was in the chains of the ill-favoured and brazen Sedley; and of the other courtiers none, perhaps, dared—so much was there, even in her lightest and gayest moments, of the true dignity of virtue in her every word

and gesture—to approach the young maid-of-honor with the suit of dishonor.

To accident, therefore, and in some lesser degree to her own demeanor, she had owed thus far her escape from persecution.

But one had now come upon the scene—to whom to outrage dignity, as to ruin virtue, and pollute honor, was but an incentive, added to the gratification of his passions, and—what with him stood far higher than his passions—his extraordinary and indomitable vanity.

Master of all graces, all arts, all accomplishments, which conciliate one sex and ruin the other, animated by no solitary spark of honor, courage, manhood, or integrity, though so skilled in polite and politic dissimulation as to make all the world believe him the very soul of honor, chivalry, and courteous courage, De Grammont had resolved to compass her destruction.

And what he had resolved in that sort heretofore, had almost inevitably come to pass.

His own powers of seduction, should they prove for once insufficient, were now aided to the utmost by no less an auxiliary than Charles himself; who lately being deeply smitten with the charms of a young French coquette—to use no harsher term—a cousin, it was given out, of the consummate count himself, had bargained—shameful contract, but most characteristic of those shameful days—for the facile Frenchman's favor with his kinswoman by engaging to throw into his arms the beautiful Bellarmyne.

All this, of course, was a secret beyond the reach of Rosamond; yet she had already perceived much and divined more of the iniquities which were plotting against her.

The odious compliments, the resolutely pertinacious atten-

tions, so marked as to banish all other courtiers from her side ; his insolently graceful importunities—to be repulsed by no scorn, no coldness, no denials ; for these he treated either as girlish caprices, or as English pruderies—had given way of late to an assumption of radiant triumph in her presence ; to an affectation of being perfectly in her good graces ; to a boastful and self-sufficient complacency ; as if he were, indeed, the admitted and successful lover—the gorgeous Jupiter of a submissive Semele.

She heard, too, from the maids-of-honor, who rallied and complimented her on her victory—as if to be the fallen victim of that Hyperion's passions were a triumph—that he proclaimed, almost aloud, by the insinuation of adroit disclaimers and modest inuendoes, that to him at least the severe Bellarmyne had lowered her arms ineffectual.

By bribery of her maids learning what would be her dress at each court festival, he appeared always wearing her colors ; so that to every one not in his secret, it must appear a matter of concert between them.

By connivance of the king—who played his most unroyal game with all the zeal of an interested ally ; and with an adroitness which proved that, if he made a less than indifferent monarch, he would have made an admirable Sir Pandarus—in every masque, quadrille, riding-party, hunting match, or other court diversion, in which it was the custom of the day that the company should be paired, the famous chevalier had as his partner the unwilling and unhappy Rosamond, whom the rules of court etiquette, stringent as those of court morality were lax, prohibited from refusing this detested companion.

Thus all the world of Whitehall, from Charles himself to the least of his courtiers, either by connivance or from being themselves deceived, received it as an acknowledged fact that the

Beau Grammont either stood already, or was in a fair way of standing, as he would with the *Belle* Bellarmyne.

And she, while she felt this, and perceived no way of avoiding it, or of disentangling herself from the nets sensibly spreading their meshes around her, trembled, and wept and prayed, and feared even herself for herself should this miserable deceit continue, fatal as the enchantment of some evil genius.

Perhaps had things thus continued, had no overt violence been attempted, no outrage offered, had she been left to the influence of that evil society in which all the angels around her were fallen angels, rejoicing and luxuriating in their fall—left to the imputation of being herself a victim of the same dark sin—left to doubt and distrust herself, and to despair of being virtuous alone in the midst of that carnival of vice—she had fallen.

But, for this time, it was not so ordered; and, as it is often the case when the darkness of human calamity is deepest, that the dawn of happiness is nearest, so now events—of which she had not the smallest suspicion, over which she had not the least control—were in progress, which effected changes as unexpected as important both in her present and future condition.

It was the close of a beautiful autumnal day; the sun had sunk, as he rarely does in summer-time in that humid climate of England, unclouded over the soft Richmond hills; and a tender, dusky twilight, mellowed only by the young light of a crescent moon, was outspread over the city and its suburbs.

On this evening there was no court ceremonial; and dispensed from attendance on her royal mistress, and yet more odious attendance in the court circle, Rosamond Bellarmyne had just wept herself and her sorrows into temporary forgetfulness, when an affair fell out between Barns Elms and Batter-

sea, which seeming to have no connexion with her or her affairs, yet influenced the whole way of her after life.

The country in that direction was, in the days of which I write, although now so covered with streets and squares of thickly settled parishes as to be indistinguishable from the metropolis itself, truly *the country*; a suburban district, it is true, but in all its aspects rural; green fields and green groves, and a maze of green winding lanes, with here and there a country villa, here and there a country tavern and wine-garden—frequented for the most part by the dissolute and wanton of both sexes, the scum of the neighboring metropolis, though visited occasionally by the *petits maitres* and *petites maitresses* of the court—often in disguise, and always on errands no less secret and illicit than those of the ordinary inmates.

It was, in short, a district presenting all the worst features—beauty excepted—of both city and country; in addition to which its character was not greatly improved by being the favorite resort of seafaring men on a frolic, and of the crews—then, as now, a most unruly set—of the river craft and barges.

In the centre of this district, not far from the river bank, to which extended its overgrown gardens and shrubberies, too luxuriant from neglect, there stood a pleasant Italian edifice; once the suburban residence of a foreign ambassador near the court of the first king James, but for some time past fallen into disuse and disrepair.

Within the few weeks preceding the date of my narrative, the minds of the country quidnuncs of the vicinity had been exercised by the repairs and decoration of the villa; the bringing thither in many wains overland, in many barges by river, much sumptuous furniture, mirrors and tapestries, carpets and

couches, cabinets of marquetry and tables of rare carving, suitable only for the abodes of the great and noble.

On the morning of that beautiful autumnal day the exercised minds had been strained to their utmost tension by the arrival—in a grand *calèche*, drawn by superb Flanders mares, and escorted by a train of servants of both sexes—of a very young, and very lovely, though dark-complexioned, foreign lady, without any visible protector and companion. And the excitement was relieved only by the announcement made by an English postillion—all the other servants being French—that the lady was Mademoiselle de la Garde, of almost royal blood in France; and that the Italian House, as it was called, had been purchased for her residence by her kinsman, the celebrated Chevalier de Grammont.

It was in one of the country hostelries mentioned above that this announcement was made; a pleasant rustic-looking place enough, at about half a mile's distance from the villa, and nearly twice as far from the main London road; lying on a lonely lane, secluded by thick, bowery hedges, and rendered almost dark at noon by the overhanging branches of the huge elms. This inn had a bowling-green, a maze, and a large garden in the rear, with pleasant apartments, both for day and night, opening upon them, for the use of visitors of the better class; while in front were a tap-room, an ordinary with shovel-boards, and a skittle-ground, for the accommodation of the neighbors and the city roisterers, who mightily affected the Royal Oak—on Sundays more especially.

At the time when this announcement was made a young gentleman of good mien was present, having entered the house casually as a stranger, dismounting from a good horse, and announcing his intention of tarrying there a day or two, having some business with a sea-captain of Battersea.

He was a man of some twenty-eight or thirty years, finely and powerfully formed, with a very deep chest, and muscular limbs. His present complexion was dark and sunburned; though the color of his chestnut hair and steel-grey eyes, as well as the fairness of his forehead—where it had been protected by his hat—showed that the blackness was the effect of exposure to the weather, not the work of nature. His carriage and air, no less than a slight scar as of a sabre-cut on his forehead, indicated that he had seen service. His garb—rich, though of grave colors, and of foreign fashion—was half military, and worn with a martial air; and he bore on his breast a small foreign order. His name, as he gave it to the curious barmaid, proved, if it were a true one, the rank and the station of the bearer—Captain Bellarmyne, from the Low Countries.

This gentleman appeared, indeed, to be something moved, if not surprised, by what he heard; but he said nothing, asked no questions, dined privately at noon in one of the garden-chambers, and after dinner took his cool tankard in an arbor looking upon the cool, winding lane.

While he was sitting there a superb cavalier came powdering along the lane, as hard as a splendid English hunter could carry him, splendidly dressed in a grand peruke, a velvet coat, and high riding-boots: a man of great personal beauty and grace; both evidently made the most of, and set off to the utmost.

“In truth it is himself!” muttered the young man. “It is De Grammont. Whom shall we see next?”

And therewith he raised himself erect, so that he came into full view of the passer-by; and lifting his plumed hat bowed courteously, but coldly.

The chevalier looked puzzled—as if he recognised the face without recognising the owner of it; looked annoyed at being

recognised ; half checked his horse—as if to stop and speak ; then changing his mind, bowed slightly and galloped forward.

“He does not recollect me,” said Captain Bellarmyne ; “that is well, too. And, now—whom shall we see next?”

It was late in the afternoon of that day before the captain saw any one ; yet it was evident that he kept himself in the way to see what was to be seen.

But when the sun had set, and the moon was almost rising, two gentlemen rode up to the horse-trough before the door, accompanied by a single groom ; and one of them asked how far was it to what was called the Italian House.

On receiving the reply they both dismounted ; and giving their horses to their attendant desired him not to wait, as they would walk home in the pleasant moonlight or tarry until morning.

That done, they called for a stoup of claret ; and stood chatting while they drank it not far from Captain Bellarmyne, who soon saw clear enough who had come the next.

One of the two—the most remarkable in all respects—was middle-aged ; something above the middle stature ; dark-complexioned and harsh-featured, with coarse, black hair, partially redeemed only by a bright, intelligent smile ; a quick, vivacious eye ; and an air of innate and unconcealable gentility, if not dignity, which shone like a diamond through the disguise—evident to Bellarmyne's eyes, at least—which he wore.

In a word, it was the king ; and the captain knew him in his disguise, as he had known De Grammont in his splendor.

At a glance anyone would have pronounced him, as he was, more witty than wise ; more good-natured than good-principled ; fitter to be a gay companion than a true friend, whether to himself or to others ; fitter to be anything than a king—and that a king of freemen.

His comrade Captain Bellarmyne knew likewise ; knew for what he was, the most worthless of men living then—perhaps, of all men—without one redeeming trait of good by which to palliate the infamy in which he steeped his really transcendent talents—John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, the constant companion of the monarch ; one of whose worst faults lay in the selection of his intimates—for friends they were not.

They tarried but a minute, and then sauntered down the lane towards the villa ; unobservant, but not unobserved by others than the young soldier of the Low Countries.

A group of bystanders were collected, who had been playing at skittles when the gentlemen rode up ; and one of these, as they spoke to the groom of walking home in the pleasant moonlight, nudged his next neighbor with his elbow, and he cast a meaning glance at a third.

Bellarmyne seeming to see nothing, saw all with his marking military eye.

One of these was—that common character in the dramas of those days—the *soldado* ; a brawny ruffian, with a swashing exterior and a coward's heart within, in a stained plush doublet with tarnished lace, a broad shoulder-belt and a long rapier balanced by a great dagger ; the second was another genius of the same order ; but of a yet lower class ; the third and most dangerous of the party, was a seafaring man ; smuggler, slaver, or pirate—any, or perhaps all—as times and occasions suited.

“Didst hear that, Ruffling Jem ?” asked the latter, scarce in a whisper, of the *soldado*, as they strolled back to their interrupted game.

“Ay, Bully sailor. What'st make of it ?”

“That there'll be pickings in the pleasant moonlight, if we look sharp, this evening.”

"Mum's the word. Sure and steady. Three to two wins the game."

"But not so surely three to three," muttered Bellarmyne, between his clinched teeth; "and you may meet that, and find it odds against you."

CHAPTER IV.

KING CHARLES II. AND THE EMPEROR'S YOUNG SOLDIER.

Some hours had passed since the occurrences which had attracted Captain Bellarmyne's attention at the Royal Oak, and it was already past ten o'clock, when three persons came forth from the marble portico of the Italian villa, two of them bareheaded, and one attired in most sumptuous court costume, with a huge flowing peruke, impregnating the air with essences, and giving out clouds of Marechal powder at every motion of the owner, a French embroidered coat of pompadour-colored velvet, gold-clocked silk stockings, and diamond-hilted sword, and diamond aiguillettes and buckles. The other two were plainly, though handsomely, attired in the usual riding costume of gentlemen of that day.

It was one of these, who stood covered, receiving the profuse compliments and thanks of the gorgeous courtier.

"Since, then, your majesty," he said, in reply to some words spoken before they left the house, "is so well satisfied with your reception, and with the fair recipient of your gracious favors, nothing remains for me but to express my deep sense of regret at the poor entertainment which I have been able to offer to so great a king; and to pray, with all humility, that your highness will be pleased to make use of my poor house,

and all that it contains, at all times and in all manners, as if it were your palace of Whitehall; which is not, in truth, more entirely your own."

"A truce to your compliments, chevalier," replied the king, laughing: "your courtesy, like the splendor of your collation, is almost beyond the power of our gratitude to return. We shall hope to see your fair cousin, near her majesty, at the next drawing-room. Meanwhile reckon on me, chevalier, as your friend in all things wherein I may serve you."

"Your majesty will remember—"

"The Bellarmyne! So far as I can promise, count, you shall be as happy—as I have been—as you desire to be. Can I say more? I give her to you with all my heart."

"His majesty," interrupted Rochester, whose caustic wit never spared his king more than less exalted subjects, "hath ever had a gracious liberal usage to give away what he hath not to give. The old cavaliers of his sainted father aver that it is all he ever hath been known to give."

"At least, he hath given enough to you, Wilmot," replied the king, who was stung as much by the truth as the pointedness of the hit: "too much, it might be thought, the license to speak so to your kind master, as, for your life! you durst not to a private gentleman. But, enough of this: it grows late; and there were some customers at that Royal Oak as we pass by, who looked as if it might be their profession, or their pastime, to cut—throats, or purses. Rochester may fall yet on a chance, this very night, to prove that his sword is not more harmless than his pen. Not a step further, chevalier; we would be incognito; and your splendor, no less than your courtesies, would betray us. Give you good night, my lord count, and *au revoir*."

And with the word, waiting no further response, the king

took his way, at his own rapid pace—with which few men could keep up without inconvenience—through the wilderness of the neglected grounds, into the gloomy windings of the lane, now almost as dark as a closed room, so feebly did the young moon and the winking stars penetrate the heavy foliage which overhung it.

The loneliness and the gloom affected even the rash and careless mind of Charles. “Odds fish!” he muttered to himself, “a flambeau, and two or three stout lacqueys were not so much amiss to-night, after all.” And then he added, turning to his taciturn companion, whose late insolence, with his wonted facility, he had forgotten—

“This were a rare time and place for your friend Buckingham’s friend, Colonel Blood. If we were to encounter him now, with two or three of his roaring boys to back him, we should soon see how much that divinity would avail us, which Will Shakspeare says ‘doth hedge about a king.’”

“Think not of it, sir,” replied Wilmot, whose teeth were half-chattering in his head already, with the self-suggested thought of what Charles had spoken. “Think not of it, sir; no one knows of this adventure save myself, the chevalier, and Tom Hardy, the groom, whom you have proved trustworthy.”

“In great things,” answered the king, “no man is *proved* trustworthy till he be tried in great things. But look not so down-hearted, Wilmot; I did not think, I only jested of it. See, here are the lights of the Royal Oak; too loyal a sign, sure, to harbor treason; and within a mile or so we shall be in the high road, where you will find company enow to rouse your spirits: or stay, the good folk are a-foot yet here, it seems; we will tarry, and take a cup to revive them.”

As the two gentlemen came into sight, or rather as soon as

the sound of their quick, light footsteps—so unlike the hob-nailed tramp of the customary foot travellers—was heard, it was observed that the three ruffians who had lingered about the tap, gambling and affecting to drink, though eschewing deep potations, slunk away into the darkness, and hurried off in the direction of Hyde Park, up the lane by which their intended prey must pass.

At the same moment the young soldier, who had been constantly watching them from his station in the arbor, arose, and entering the house, went to his apartment quickly and in silence.

No one was left except the landlord, leaning on the hatch of his door, a green-aproned tapster, and two or three hostler-boys, lounging about the horse-block and trough.

A cup of burnt sherry, which they first called for, was speedily supplied; but when Charles himself, who perhaps felt that he had acted rashly, began to sound Boniface as to the possibility of hiring, or even purchasing saddle-horses, he soon found that he might as well have asked for camels; so making Wilmot pay the scot, who by chance possessed a few shillings—the royal pockets being, of course, empty, he walked away with slashing strides, laughing gaily at his own absurdity in thinking to hire post-horses at a wine-garden.

Scarcely had they departed, following unconsciously in the steps of the ruffians who had preceded, and were now, doubtless, awaiting them in ambush, when Captain Bellarmyne passed the landlord, who was shutting up the house; and without answering his inquiry, how soon he should return, followed the pair at such a distance as to keep barely within hearing of their footsteps.

He had a long, dark cloak thrown loosely over his shoulders; and besides a stout horseman's tuck hanging on his

thigh, wore a brace of fine pistols, recently loaded, at his belt.

For about half a mile he followed the king slowly and unseen, yet having still in ear his firm, rapid, vigorous footstep, until at length, just at the spot where he anticipated mischief, the sound suddenly ceased.

It was as fit a spot for ill deeds as ever was chosen by the clerks of St. Nicholas. The lane here turned at right angles, a footpath entering it on the right by a turnstile; it was overhung by two or three heavy-boughed oaks, making it twilight even at noon; and on the left was flanked by a dark, thick-set coppice, divided from it by a foul, stagnant ditch, deep in mire, and mantled with duck-weed and rank aquatic verdure.

The only gleam of light which entered this thieves' corner, came faintly through the opening of the footpath, and was reflected a little more brightly from the water, on the surface of which seemed to be concentrated all the feeble glimmer of the starlit skies.

As the tread of the king ceased, Bellarmyne flung away his cloak, and rushing forward, heard a rough voice exclaim—

“Come! come! No nonsense! Your purses, cavaliers—or your lives; and you may think yourself in luck if the weight of the first redeem the second.”

“Odds fish!” cried Charles, “mine won’t; for there’s not a groat in’t, I’ll be sworn. How runs yours, Jack Wilmot? for, if it’s not the fuller, we must make steel redeem our lives instead of silver.”

And he drew as he spoke, and put himself on guard, facing the sailor and the *soldado*; who, though with their points advanced, still paused, awaiting the courtier’s reply, as pre-

ferring a sure ransom to a doubtful conflict; but the bolder ruffian cried—

“But silver won’t do, my noble roisterers; we must get gold, an’ you are to go skin free.”

“Hold your hands!” exclaimed Wilmot, losing all self-possession from the extremity of fear; “this is treason—it is **THE KING!**”

A loud, coarse laugh replied, in scorn, “The king—a likely king, indeed; without a maravedi in his purse!—down with the lying beggars, if ’twere but for their impudence. Treason, quotha! and not a groat in ’s pocket! Together, boys—have at them.”

And the clash of steel followed sharp and continuous. All this had passed so rapidly, and the minds of those engaged were so intent on the work in hand, that Bellarmyne’s approach, swiftly as he hurried up, was unperceived till he was close beside them.

“Stand to it, cavaliers!” he cried; “aid is at hand! We are stronger than the ruffians—pink them home!”

At his shout the thieves fell back a little; and had the true men stood their ground stoutly, would have fled without more ado. But Rochester, though he had fought tolerably well for a moment, fear lending him a desperate sort of courage, when he heard a step and shout close behind him, misunderstood their import; and, losing all heart, threw down his sword, leaped the foot-stile with singular agility, and ran away as hard as he could across the fields toward London.

Seeing this cowardly desertion, the rogues rallied; and the sailor, who was their best man, facing Bellarmyne, the other two pressed the king home. Had there been any light, the ruffian could not have kept his life ten seconds against the practised weapon of the Imperialist; but, as it was, scarcely

the glimmer of the points could be discerned, like glow-worms in the gloom ; and the antagonists struck, thrust, and warded, by feeling the contact of their blades, not by seeing their direction.

After a minute or two, finding that the men were resolute—that in the dubious darkness he had little or no advantage over his immediate antagonist—while the king's hard breathing, and his breaking ground once or twice, told him that he was overmatched—the young soldier changed his tactics. Still keeping up his guard against the sailor, he quietly drew a pistol with his left hand, cocked it, and springing back with a quick bound to the side of Charles, who had been pushed a pace or two behind him, discharged his weapon within a hand's breadth of the head of the tallest ruffian.

It was just in time ; for the king's guard was beaten down by the blade of the other, and the soldado's point was at his throat. The broad glare of the sudden discharge startled all who were engaged save one ; and he never started more. The fatal ball crashed through his brain, and he was a dead man ere his heavy body plashed into the noisome ditch behind him.

"Fire-arms !" shouted the sailor. "Ware-hawk ! *Vamos !*" and he, too, leaped the turnstile, and disappeared ; while his companion took to his heels up the lane, and was soon out of hearing.

"You are not hurt, sir ?" asked the young soldier, not desiring to penetrate the-incognito of the king, as he returned the pistol to his girdle.

"Thanks to you, no, sir," answered the king, warmly. "But for you, I had been past feeling any hurt. Your pistol did good service—it saved my life."

"It has done me better before," replied Bellarmyne, laugh-

ing; "for it saved my own at Cracow, when a big Croatian had me down, with his knee on my chest, and a knife a span broad at my weasand."

"That was good service, sir, too," said Charles, gravely; "but, perhaps, not better than this."

"Better for me, I only said," answered Bellarmyne, gaily; "but come, sir, if you are of my way of thinking, we were better to be moving. That pistol-shot will bring out all the bees buzzing from their hives under the Royal Oak; and, though not dangerous, they might be troublesome. I should have used my pistols when I first came up, but that I thought of this; and I should not have needed to use them at all, had your friend shown himself a man."

"You are prudent, sir, as well as brave; rare qualities in any man. We were better, as you say, to be moving. Add to the favor you have done me by giving me my friend's sword; yonder it lies; it might tell tales of him. Thanks! Now, which way lies your road, sir? Mine takes me towards the Mall. Will you give me your company?"

"Willingly, sir. Had you not asked I should have offered it. I have friends in the city with whom I can bestow myself; although I had intended to pass the night, where, perhaps, you saw me, sir, at the Royal Oak."

"Saw you? No! When, sir?" asked the king, quickly; and then, without giving him time to reply, he added, "One word more—do you know me, sir?"

"I saw you, sir, as you dismounted at the Royal Oak this afternoon with your companion, and judged you to be gentlemen of the court on a frolic; but I have not the honor of either of your acquaintance. Fortunately, I overheard some chance words of those ruffians, by which I learned that they

intended to waylay you, and was so enabled to do you this slight service."

"Slight service!" answered Charles, with a light laugh; "I wonder what you gentlemen of the sword think *good* service? But come, as that learned thief exclaimed, as he made his exit, '*Vamos.*' The rogue patroles, I suppose, will find their brother thief dead in the ditch to-morrow, and raise a hue and cry of murder—let them. We can keep our secret."

And walking stoutly and rapidly along, they soon reached the high-road; after an hour's active exertion passed Hyde Park corner—a field on the very outskirts of the town, just coming into vogue as a court-promenade and riding-course; and entered Piccadilly—a wide road, lined with the occasional mansions and gardens of the nobility, but little resembling the continuous and fashionable street of the present day.

The hour was so late that all the lights in the dwellings and public places were extinguished; and the watchmen of that time, like those two centuries later, preferred dozing in their snug sentry boxes to perambulating the streets, when all sensible and well-disposed people are sound asleep in their beds.

Before the guard-house, however, at the entrance of the Mall, there was a brilliant lamp burning and a sentinel on duty; here, without approaching so near to the latter as to give him occasion to challenge or salute, the king paused where the full light fell on his strongly-marked, swarthy features.

"Now, sir, look at me well: peruse my lineaments; and see if you recognise the person whose life you have saved? Did you ever see me before to-day?"

Bellarmyne looked at him earnestly, and replied—

"If ever, it must have been in the Low Countries. Perhaps

at Breda—were you ever there? I trod on English soil but three weeks since, for the first time these thirteen years.”

“And your name?” asked the king, perfectly satisfied that his incognito was safe.

“Is Armytage Bellarmyne, late captain of the Emperor’s Life-Guard.”

“A kinsman of my good friend Nicholas Bellarmyne, of the city? whom men call the English Merchant.”

“His son. Is he your friend?”

“A very old one.”

“And your name?” asked Bellarmyne.

“Is my secret. We shall meet again; then you will know it. Good night!”

They shook hands, bowed, and parted.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHEVALIER DE GRAMMONT; THE FRENCH KING’S EX-COURTIER.

It was some five or six days after the occurrences near the Italian House, a space during which Rosamond had been more seriously annoyed than ever by the importunities of the count, and the scarcely equivocal allusions of Charles to what he was pleased to call her penchant for the illustrious Frenchman, that a gay group of courtiers had, at an early hour of the morning, accompanied the king and his train of spaniels into St. James’s Park; where he amused himself, as was his wont, feeding his tame water-fowl in the canal, playing with his dogs, and chatting in his easy unkingly manner, which rendered him so popu-

lar, despite all his ill-government, with such promenaders or chance-passengers as he chanced to know by sight.

Among the party, who accompanied him rather as equal associates than as subjects, were De Grammont, Sir George Etherege, the accomplished Buckhurst afterwards Duke of Dorset, and wild William Crofts, groom of the stole; with all of whom, making no distinction of rank, he gossipped and jested in his loose, idle way, and allowed them to pass their jokes on himself in return.

In the course of their wild and licentious talk, De Grammont alluded jestingly, but with a visibly earnest intention, to the want of progress which he made with the beautiful Bellarmyne, adding pointedly, "if your majesty were half as energetic a wooer for others as you are for yourself, and came as briskly to the point, she would not remain long so perdurably *en garde*."

The king laughed, not less, perhaps, at the effrontery of the count's *jeu des mots* on his own kinswoman's dishonor, than on the coolness with which he seemed to rely on his good offices in a matter so dishonest; and replied—"Faith! when I do such things by proxy, I use my good friend Chiffinch; you had better apply to him, count, and if he do not bring the affair to a prosperous event, by my honor, I see nothing for it but you must carry her off *vi et armis*, as Rochester would have done fair Mistress Mallet. I dare say, you have many another *petite maison* besides the Italian House."

"But I have heard say, your majesty was very angry with Rochester; I could not survive my king's anger."

"Rochester *failed*, chevalier, and the lady was neither pacified nor placable. I never heard the name of De Grammont coupled with the word failure."

"Not at Basset, sire, nor Lansquenet, nor yet at Ombre," re-

plied Etherege, with a mock reverence to De Grammont ; “ but fame is more mendacious even than her own ill-report goes, if fortune be as kind to the chevalier in the affairs of Venus, as she has shown herself in those of Mars and Plutus. Crofts, here, has told us some funny tales about his devotion to Made-moiselle St. Germain.”

“ Odds fish !” exclaimed the king, breaking off abruptly, and looking earnestly towards the Bird-cage Walk, from which direction two persons were advancing—one an old gentleman of seventy years of age or upwards, dressed in a suit of plain brown velvet, with a gold chain about his neck, and a gold-headed crutch-cane in his hand, in lieu of the sword at his side, without which gentlemen then rarely went abroad ; the other a youth of a military deportment, in half military attire, whom Charles, with his usual quickness, recognised at once as his timely assistant in the lane near Chelsea—“ Odds fish ! whom have we here ? That should be our worthy friend of the city, good Master Nicholas Bellarmyne ; but who is the stout gallant on whose arm he leans ?—a likely looking lad, with an arm and leg that might have won favor in bluff King Harry’s sight, who loved, they say, to look upon the thews and sinews of a man ! Who is he ? Do none of you know, gentlemen ? Then, faith ! I must e’en ask myself.”

Then as the old merchant and his son were passing by, as was the etiquette, at a respectful distance, merely uncovering as they went their way, he called after them in his ordinary blunt manner, “ Why, how now, Master Nicholas Bellarmyne, are we out of favor with our good friends in the city, that one of their best men gives us the go-by so cavalierly ?”

Thus summoned, the persons who had provoked the royal attention drew near, the father keeping his head erect, though uncovered, and looking his majesty full in the face, with an eye

as clear and calm as his own ; but his son drooping his brow a little, and having his eyes downcast, as if he were either bashful or reluctant, and falling back a pace or two as they approached the presence.

"Not so, your majesty," replied the merchant, seeing that the king waited a reply, "you are, as ever, our very good lord and gracious master, and we desire but to know wherein we may pleasure your grace, in order to do so. But, seeing that you were private, we did not dare intrude until commanded."

"One would think, Master Bellarmyne," replied the king, laughing, "that you had attained the years to know that there is no intrusion, nowadays, possible by men with money-bags like yours, if fame o'errate them not, especially on kings and courtiers, who, however much of gold they may bear on their backs, carry none, on a point of honor, in their purses. But who is this gentleman you have with you ? I have not, I think, seen his face at court, yet I remember something of the trick of it. Who is he, that I know him, but cannot call a name to him ?"

"My son, your majesty. Armytage Bellarmyne ; he has returned but of late from Germany, where, and in the Low Countries, he has had the honor to serve the king and emperor in twelve campaigns."

"Twelve campaigns !" replied the king. "He must have begun betimes. And did he win that medal there, which he wears on his breast ? And wherefore hath he not been presented to us, his lawful native sovereign, for whom, I presume, his sword will be drawn hereafter ?"

"Whenever need shall be, your grace. But you have indulged us so long with the blessings of peace that England had no need of it ; and youth is rash, as your majesty knows, and perilous, and will have its vent in mischief somewhere. Touch-

ing his presentment, he tarried only for the arrival of my lord of Craven, to whom he had the good fortune to be known abroad, and who was gracious to promise that he would stand his sponsor to your majesty."

"Ha! Craven!" said the king; "gallant and loyal Craven! Well, we will accept Craven absent, as his sponsor, and elect you, sir, present, as his proxy. Present him to us. We would know where we have seen his face before."

Armytage, on hearing these words, exceeding gracious as they were, advanced uncovered; and, as his father named him, knelt gracefully on one knee, and kissed the hand which was extended to him with a smile, thinking, as he did so, with how much less ceremony he had grasped it only a few nights previously. Then, rising to his feet, he stood, respectfully, but perfectly unembarrassed, before Charles, who, with a twinkling eye and suppressed smile, pursued the subject, determined evidently to try his new ally's spirit and discretion.

"How is it, sir," he said, "that your face is so familiar to me? It is not your likeness to your father, for you are not like him. I have seen yourself before—where have we met?"

"So please your majesty," replied Armytage, himself unable to refrain from smiling, "once, many years since, I had the honor to see you ride through the streets of Breda; and, I believe, your majesty's eye might have fallen on my features. But I had thought it too small a matter to rest in your memory."

"More things rest in my memory," said the king, significantly, "than men think for. It must have been in Breda, then. Well, sir, you see I have not forgotten; and you shall see I will not forget you. I hear you have served, sir—where and under whom? And where did you win that medal which you wear? I see it is imperial."

"I have served, sire," replied the young man, modestly, "both

in the Low Countries and in Transylvania; besides one campaign in Denmark. I have fought under Turenne and Montecuculi, and had the good fortune to be at the forcing of the Prince of Condé's lines at Arras, at the defeat of Ragotsky's Transylvanians before Cracow, and at the relief of Copenhagen. It was before Cracow, where I served as the general's aide-de-camp, that I had the honor to receive this decoration."

"You have, indeed, been fortunate, sir," answered the king, graciously. "Whether to have fought under such heroes as Montecuculi, or against such heroes as Condé and Gustavus Adolphus, were enough to satisfy the most ambitious of glory. And what propose you to do now, sir?"

"To lay my sword at your majesty's feet, if it can serve you. I should have done so earlier, could I have quitted the emperor's service with honor, before peace was declared. If not, and these rumors of war between the empire and the Turks prove true, I may have your license, sire, to take a turn against the Ottomans, under my old commander."

"No, no, sir. For the present, you have had fighting enough, methinks, without getting your ears cut off by some janizary, and sent up in salt to the Sublime Porte. We shall try to find something for you to do here in England. Meantime, her majesty holds court to-morrow night; we shall command your attendance, desiring to know how our English ladies compare with the fair Austrians, and the Polish beauties, of whom we have heard wonders."

And a slight bow indicating that the interview was finished, Armytage and his father retired with due reverence, the latter marvelling much to what they could owe so unusual a reception from the king.

As they withdrew, Charles sauntered away towards the palace playing with his dogs; and, reverting to the matter uppermost

in his mind, asked De Grammont carelessly, "Well, chevalier, what think you of our new-found subject?"

"A bold youth!" answered De Grammont, shortly—for he had observed the community of names between the young imperialist and his charmer, and foreboded no good from his arrival. Moreover, he foresaw a rival favorite near the throne, and his vanity could brook *nil simile aut secundum*.

"Odds fish!" cried the king hastily, "a brave one, rather, and a modest, and a discreet! I should like to see one of you, gentlemen, who—" he checked himself abruptly, and added with a low bow to De Grammont, "but I forget that I speak to the comrade and sharer of the great Condé's glory at Sens, Norlinguen, and Fribourg, and of the no less great Turenne's, at the forcing of those same lines at Arras."

The chevalier could but bow low to the gracefully turned compliment of the king, though he half suspected some latent meaning in the king's reticence. He remained, however, silent, and something discomposed during the remainder of the promenade.

The king was also, contrary to his wont, absorbed in thought, grave, and taciturn.

"What's a-foot now, Buckhurst?" whispered Etherege to his friend, as they lagged a step or two behind the party. "And who's the new Bellarmyne?"

"Some one," replied Buckhurst, profanely, "whom either the good Lord or the foul fiend has sent to spoil the Frenchman's game with the other Bellarmyne."

"The good Lord, then," replied Etherege, laughing, "the good Lord, for a rouleau! The foul fiend would have helped the Frenchman. I don't like this selling or swapping of English ladies' honors—not being over nice myself, or squeamish."

"Nor I—an English king being salesman," said Buckhurst.

Yet these were two of the wildest and most licentious gallants of that unscrupulous time; but there are things so foul as must needs make the most corrupt gorge rise against them, if the heart thrill to any latent sense of honor.

The queen's court, on the following night, was more superb than usual; more decked with flowers of female loveliness, than usual, it could not be; for probably no such assemblage of beauty and grace—alas! that modesty and virtue may not be added—was ever brought together.

There was the superb Barbara of Castlemaine, radiant in almost incomparable beauty, but dressed, or undressed rather, to a degree calculated to excite disgust, rather than any warmer feeling, and brazen with more than cynical effrontery; yet the poor, broken-spirited queen smiled on her, and exchanged compliments with her, in the face of all the sneering court.

There was Frances Stuart, for whose love it was rumored that Charles would fain have been divorced from Catharine of Braganza, "the greatest beauty," as quaint old Pepys says, "I did ever see in all my life, with her cocked-hat and red plume, with her sweet little Roman nose, and excellent *taille*."

There was the fair and languid Middleton, with her soft insipid smile and love-lorn look askance. There was the beauteous and virtuous Miss Hamilton, with her commanding form, and swan-like neck, her open, smooth, white forehead, and her round arms, the loveliest in the world. There was little Miss Jennings, with her complexion the fairest and brightest that was ever seen; her abundant flaxen hair, her exquisite mouth, with that *nez retroussé*, and that animated arch expression, that redeemed her from the charge of insipidity—reproach of blonde beauties; Miss Bagot, with her regular, calm features, her "brown complexion, of that sort so unusual in England, and the continual blush which she had ever on her cheek, without having

anything to blush for ;”* Miss Temple, with her fine and languishing eyes, wreathed smile, and lively air ; and, though the last, the most lovely, the best, the purest of them all, innocent Rosamond Bellarmyne, with her clear blue eyes revealing every sentiment of her frank and candid soul, her cheek pale from annoyance and agitation, yet sweeter from the purity of its very pallor, and her rich brown hair flowing, as it were, in mingled masses of chestnut silk and gold, over her marble shoulders.

That night the king did not tease her, nor did his face once wear that malicious smile, or his lip once syllable the Count De Grammont’s name. On the contrary, his countenance was grave, and his voice calm and kind, when he told her that he had found her a new cousin, whom he would present to her that evening. And when she started, and blushed crimson, and looked fluttered and frightened, he answered her look by a reassuring smile, and said, “A very honorable one, Mistress Rosamond.”

No man in England knew the family histories of all his subjects better than Charles, long as he had resided in a foreign land ; nor was the name of Bellarmyne so common of occurrence but that so soon as he knew the name of the emperor’s young soldier, he knew also his relationship to the queen’s maid-of-honor. To day he had thought—not a common thing for Charles to do—he had thought of all that those Bellarmynes, of old race, had done and suffered for his unlucky house, and, as he thought, his conscience smote him—for he had a conscience, at times, when anything pierced deep enough to wake it into life—and he paused and repented.

He did present Captain Bellarmyne to Rosamond, after he had presented him, with much distinction, to the queen, and

* *Memoirs of De Grammont*, by Count Anthony Hamilton.

took care that he should be her partner; which then implied association not for a single dance, but for the whole ball, and the banquets that followed it; and once or twice during the evening, as he went round among his guests, joking and drinking with them like anything rather than a king, he found time to say a passing word or two good-naturedly, and winked most unroyally at Armytage, and clinked his glass of champagne with Rosamond, as he drank to her "with his eyes."

Grammont was furious. Finding himself balked of Rosamond, he had attached himself to Miss Hamilton, to whom he was always very attentive, and whom he afterwards married—being brought back from Calais for that purpose by dislike to her brother's pistols—but he was abstracted and rude, and tore her enamelled fan to pieces in his fretful mood; and when Miss Jennings quizzed him on his discomposure, he answered her so sneeringly and shortly, that the saucy gipsy turned her back full in his face, and did not speak to him again for a month.

Once he attacked the king, bantering, but evidently sore.

"Odds fish! chevalier," Charles answered testily, "win her yourself, and wear her. If you can't win her yourself, send Chiffinch, or your man Termes, who lost your fine coat in the quicksand at Calais. But for your reputation's sake, chevalier, don't lisp to them at Paris what dirty work you asked a king to do for you!"

"Or did for a king," said Etherege, in a low voice, as he chanced to stand near him.

"Sir!" cried De Grammont, turning on him furiously.

"Sir," replied Etherege, quietly. "I call you so, because it is the English for chevalier"—and, with a low bow, he turned his back, and walking away, asked some one to present him to Captain Bellarmyne.

So incensed was De Grammont, now, that he lost all com-

mand of himself; and though he felt it was impossible to quarrel in the very banqueting hall of the palace, he still could not refrain, when the ball was ended, and his self-constituted rival was looking for his hat and cloak in the ante-chamber, from walking up and addressing him, in a manner anywhere haughty and unbecoming, but surpassingly so in a royal apartment.

"Captain Bellarmyne, I believe?"

"At your service, Chevalier de Grammont."

"Will you permit me, then, to inquire the meaning of your attentions to Mistress Rosamond Bellarmyne?"

"Certainly, count, to inquire anything you please; and, being myself the lady's poor cousin, on learning your superior pretensions, I shall gladly answer you."

"Then, sir, I have another question," De Grammont began fiercely; when Bellarmyne as calmly interrupted him, "Which I shall also gladly answer, sir, anywhere but within the precincts of my sovereign's palace."

"Good-night, Count de Grammont!" said a deep voice behind them. Both turned; it was the king, with a mien of unwonted dignity, if severity were not the better word. The proud Frenchman could but bow and retire.

The face of Charles relaxed, as he asked, "Where did you learn to be so discreet, so young, Captain Bellarmyne?"

"Under General Montecuculi, sire. He made me once stand on guard, all steel from my teeth to my toes, from the rise to the set of a July sun, for saluting my superior officer when he wished to be incognito."

"He did very right, sir," answered Charles, laughing; "and he seems to have made you a pretty good soldier. Now, if you will wait on Major-General Craven, at eight o'clock to-morrow morning, he will be very glad to see Major Bellarmyne, of the Coldstream Guards. Pleasant dreams to you, major."

CHAPTER VI.

BLACKHEATH ; AN ATTEMPT AND A FAILURE.

Three days succeeding the queen's mask flew away, to Rosamond, on wings of the swiftest—perhaps the pleasantest three days she had ever known. The court, meanwhile, was full of rumors, the least definite and the most singular imaginable. The sudden and incomprehensible advancement of a young, unknown soldier ; representing no interest, urged forward by no favorite, seemingly without recommendation beyond a foreign order of merit, to a grade in the favorite regiment of the service which great lords coveted, would have been in itself a nine days' wonder. But to this were added the retirement of Rochester from court, no one knew whither, no one pretended to conjecture on what cause—the *quasi* disgrace of the Chevalier de Grammont ; who, though he was still constant in attendance on the royal person, still sulked and held himself aloof, while no one, Charles the least of all, appeared to notice his ill-humor, or to regret his withdrawal, who a little while before had been the *magnus Apollo* of Whitehall—the preferment of Major Bellarmyne not only to his military grade, but to something nearly approaching to familiarity with the easy monarch, who distinguished him on every occasion, constantly required his presence, selected him as the companion of his private walks, and would, it was evident, have promoted him to the questionable honor of favoritism, had not Armytage shown himself utterly intractable and repugnant, as unfitted alike by temper and principle for the envied but unenviable post—and last, not least, the reticence of the king, who, usually so garrulous and free of access, held perfect silence, and was entirely unapproachable on this subject, de-

meaning himself in all other respects as if nothing had occurred out of the ordinary course, and appearing even gayer and more lighthearted than his wont.

The least of these events would have sufficed, even in busier circles, where luxury and leisure are less prolific of idle surmises and flippant scandal, to set the drones a-buzzing, and the whole hive humming angrily, if not yet stinging. Dire, therefore, in Whitehall, was the confusion of tongues; wonderful in Spring-Garden the ruin of characters. Yet, for all this, seeing that Major Bellarmyne was, not dubiously, the rising man of the day, and in favor both with the king's and the queen's circles, it is wonderful how soon all the handsomest women of the court discovered a thousand manly charms and graces in his person, a thousand attractions in his air and conversation, of which no one had ever before suspected him; and how all the men reported him a person of parts no less shining than solid, a fellow of infinite wit, in short the most desirable of companions, although a week before they would have passed him in the Mall with a contemptuous wonder who that tall fellow might be, or a sneer at the soldier of fortune.

Nor is it much more easy of explanation how Rosamond, who had for months been left almost alone, in the midst of an unsympathizing crowd, to endure persecutions which she could not avoid, now that she was connected, both by similarity of name and by the intimacy which the king undoubtedly fostered between them, with the new hero of the minute, became the object of so much friendly regard and attention, that it would have been impossible, had he attempted it, for the count to renew the importunities which had rendered her past life almost insupportable.

Neither Rosamond, however, nor her newly acquired friend and cousin—of whose existence she had never even heard

a week since — attached much importance, or paid much regard to the fickle favors of the courtier crowd. To both of them it was a new phase of existence; to her who had never known one of her own blood, except her father, too far removed from herself in years to be more than a tenderly loved and dutifully revered parent, it was a new delight to find a kinsman on whose strength she might repose, in whose honor she might confide, in whose conversation she might find—something long sought but undiscovered—truth blended with wit, sincerity undivorced from the lighter graces, to whom she could disclose much which it had sorely galled her to conceal, almost as if he had been a dear elder brother.

And for him whose life had been spent for the most part in the tented field, in the actual shock of the heady fight, or in the dull monotony of the camp, who had mingled but little in female society, and that little only ceremoniously according to the formal routine of the continental courts, now to find himself thrown, as if naturally, into close and intimate association with one so beautiful, so frank, so charming in her innocence and artless graces, one whom nothing should lead him to regard as a stranger, but rather to protect and cherish as his nearest of kin on earth, except those of the elder generation, it possessed a pleasure greater far than the mere fascination of novelty.

All those who have travelled or sojourned long abroad, know well what a void they have felt about the heart on returning to the old home and finding that for them it is no longer home—that they are gone, all gone, those old familiar faces; that the old friends are dead; the young friends dispersed, estranged, occupied with new friends, new ties, new pleasures, new associations; that, in quitting the land of the stranger

they have in truth broken off the later, though without recovering the older, bonds of companionship.

Particularly had this been the case with Armytage Bellarmyne. He had left England when little more than a mere boy ; his mother he had never known ; brothers, sisters, kinsmen, and kinswomen, he had none. Sir Reginald and his daughter, who were, though his nearest relatives, but distant cousins, had been in exile from a time beyond the date of his earliest memory ; in truth, he remembered not ever to have heard of them at home.

But he had heard much, pitied much, sympathized much abroad ; for he had learned there, on all sides, of the doings and the sufferings of the elder branch of his house, of the unfaltering loyalty and faith, of the extreme poverty and unbending integrity of the old cavalier, and something of the beauty and high qualities of his daughter.

Having left home, known to no relations, and to few friends beyond mere school-companions, the weariness, the void, the sense of strangeness he experienced, finding himself, not figuratively, but indeed a stranger in the land of his birth, were so overpowering that he had indeed meditated returning—as he had informed the king he wished to do—to take arms under his old commander, who was in hourly expectation of being called into the field against the redoubtable forces of the Turk, who was then held in awe by the strongest powers of continental Europe.

Here, then, were two young persons thrown together into that most perfect and confidential of all solitudes, the solitude of a crowd ; because it is solitude without having the air of being such, and, as being liable to slight interruptions, which do not in truth interrupt it, awakens no sense of strangeness, no idea of alarm, or suspicion of impropriety.

Far otherwise, indeed, for it seemed to be agreed by common consent of all around them that they were to be partners, companions on all occasions together ; and who that has ever been so placed, knows not how strongly that operates in facilitating, almost in creating, intimacy.

Inclined from the first to be pleased—to like each the other—every moment drew them nearer and nearer together ; topics of mutual interest were not wanting, for the young soldier never wearied of listening to his artless companion's descriptions of the old ivy-mantled abbey, grey and neglected among its unshorn woods and fern-encumbered chase, a world too wide for its shrunken demesnes ; and the deep sympathy he evinced for the aged, honorable veteran, sitting alone, in his old age, in the grand gloom of his ancestral halls, brooding over the ruins of his dilapidated fortunes, with no child, no dear friend, no veteran companion, to fill his cup or smoothe his pillow, or soften the downward path of his declining years ; with nothing to look forward to on earth but a deserted death-bed, and the care of menials, would alone have bound Rosamond to him with chains of steel, had there been nothing else to draw them together.

But she, too, like Desdemona, would seriously incline her ear to what he had to relate of foreign climes and customs, and to the chances and romances, the gleams of chivalry and touches of sweet mercy, which are the redeeming tints in the black hue of battle-histories, the “one touch of nature” which indeed makes the “whole world kin.”

And from liking, they imperceptibly glided on into loving, without being led at all to examine into the nature of their feelings, without suspecting or inquiring how things went with them, until Armytage awoke and found that he had been dreaming how pleasant it would be, and how excellent a use

of his father's hoarded stores and ponderous money-bags, to redeem the sequestered acres and restore the antique glories of Bellarmyne Abbey; and to cheer the sad and solitary days of old Sir Reginald, by giving him a stout and soldierly son's arm whereon to prop his tottering steps; and then, by an easy transition, to fancy how delightful it would be to see Rosamond presiding as the household deity, serene in youthful beauty, the cherished daughter, adored wife, and charming mother.

And Rosamond, too, began to count the minutes when Armytage was absent, and to look wistfully for his tall figure in the crowded ball or banquet-hall; and to thrill and blush and tremble when she saw him coming; and to wonder why she was such a little fool to shake and quiver like an aspen leaf at his approach, when she was so glad to have him come.

And the good-natured king chuckled and laughed within himself, perfectly content and delighted at the success of his plans. He knew how the elder branch of the Bellarmynes had lost all in his own and his father's cause; and now that he had begun to think about it at all, he both thought and felt strongly. If he could easily have redressed their grievances, he had done so eagerly; but, in truth, he had not the power to redress them by any means. The sequestered lands had been sold to innocent third parties, and these were secured by amnesty at the restoration. There were no means of indemnifying the impoverished and ruined cavaliers; the court was needy, thriftless, improvident, indebted, and, between his ladies, and his favorites, and his pleasures, the king was for the most part penniless.

But he had conceived this plan of rewarding his staunch old veteran, and of building up his broken fortunes by means of the vast wealth of the London merchant; making, at the

same time, two very charming young persons happy, bringing together a dissevered family connection, reinstating a fine old hereditary estate, a fine old hereditary name—in a word, if not of doing a good action, at least of bringing about a good result. To effect this he was willing—yes! he was even willing to take some personal trouble. It was rather amusing, by the way, than the reverse. He had made up his mind, if he could bring it about, to create a new peerage, in which Sir Reginald should be first baron, with remainder to the citizen's son, if that might facilitate matters; and, as he saw all things in progress as he would have them, he began to wax proud and happy in self-approbation, and to fancy himself a sort of *Deus ex machinâ*, descending to solve a knot indissoluble by the efforts of his faithful subjects.

It occurs, not so seldom as we are apt to imagine, however, that some sudden incident or occurrence—accidents, perhaps, in the true sense of the word, *are not*—will often either produce, or mature and expedite results which the most skilful management and the wisest counsels would have failed to bring to so felicitous a termination. Times will occur when all things appear to keep in one consentient current, accidentally, as it were, tending—yet with a purpose so evident, a direction so manifest, that it is impossible to doubt the interposition of an unknown, overruling will—to one desired or dreaded event, one favorable or disastrous end; and so it fell out in this instance.

A grand stag-hunt was to be held in honor of some foreign prince of one of the small German states, who happened to be on a visit at Whitehall; and all the court circle were ordered to attend on an appointed day, the court itself adjourning for the time to Windsor Castle, and those who were not so fortunate as to be of the royal party taking up their

quarters, wherever they might find them, in the town of Windsor, or the adjacent villages, as Datchet, Egham, Staines, and Kingston-upon-Thames, all of which were crowded with gay guests and splendid retinues of horses, livery servants, and followers of all kinds.

Major Bellarmyne was one of the fortunate few who were ordered to attend at the castle ; and, on the eve of his departure, received his appointment as chief equerry to his majesty, which of course relieved him from duty with his regiment.

The day appointed for the hunt—a rare occurrence for fête days—dawned auspiciously, warm, soft, and slightly overclouded, precisely such a day as huntsmen love, and lady equestrians do not hate, as there was neither sun enough to offend their fair complexions, nor wind to disturb their plumes, or ruffle their flowing draperies.

At an early hour the heath was alive with gay and animated groups ; large tents were pitched on a rising ground, with the royal banner floating above them, in which a superb collation was to be served at noon ; while the bands of the Lifeguards and Oxford Blues, then as now the magnificent household troops of the British sovereign, made the wild echoes ring with the symphonies of their brazen instruments. Deer, which had been taken in toils in Windsor forest, were on the ground in carts, to be released and coursed by the fleet and superb English greyhounds, a breed of dog which had already been brought to a high degree of perfection by Lord Oxford and others ; and the wide, open, undulating stretches of the heath being excellently appropriate to the sport, and the day in every light propitious, great sport was anticipated. Nor did the result deceive the expectation. Course succeeded course, proving alike the speed and strength of the noble red deer, and the unrivalled ardor, courage, and condition of the gallant greyhounds.

The king was in the highest spirits and good humor, for out of the first five matches his dogs had won three, and the best of his kennel had not yet been slipped. It was about ten o'clock—for our ancestors, if they had many vices, had at least the one virtue of rising early in the morning, and on that day the beauties of King Charles's court were mounted and a-field, radiant in fresh beauty, almost as soon as Aurora herself—when the king observing that Bellarmyne, according to the duties of his office, followed closely at his heels, called to him, pointing as he spoke to a fair bevy of maids-of-honor with their attendant cavaliers, among whom the graceful figure of Rosamond Bellarmyne was conspicuous.

"Major Bellarmyne," he said, "for all we have named you our equerry in chief, it is not with the purpose of tying you to our horse's tail, or keeping you dangling after us from matins to midnight. Away with you, sir; yonder is metal more attractive, if I be not the worse mistaken, than the best stag that ever ran upon four legs over lifted lea or mountain heather. Away! we will summon you, if we need your presence."

De Grammont, with a group of other gentlemen and nobles, was about the king and his princely guest when the courteous words were uttered; but Armytage paused not to see who heard or heard not, but galloped away joyously to join her whom he had already begun to admit to himself as the mistress of his heart.

By this time, as was unavoidable from the nature of the sports, the company had become much scattered, many of the chases having been long and nearly straight on end; and, as each deer was taken, a fresh one was driven up, as fast as four horses could convey the light cart which contained it to the scene of the last capture, so that there was no general rallying point for the straggling groups, but the scene of action varied from point

to point, over the wide extent of wild heath, open downs, and forest land, which was then included in the royal chase of Blackheath.

In spite of this, however, many minutes did not elapse before Armytage had found his lady, who, infinitely the best rider of the whole field of beauties, though but indifferently mounted, was riding with Miss Bagot, who was but a timid horsewoman, and a single cavalier only, the young Lord Dynevor, who greatly affected the society of that graceful nymph; the rest of their party having just separated from them in order to approach nearer to the royal presence.

Scarcely had he exchanged the first salutations with his fair lady before a noble *hart*, with no less than ten times to his antlers, being what is technically called a *hart royal*, was uncartered, and, taking their direction, came sweeping gracefully past them, followed by three choice greyhounds, and close behind these by the king, his royal guest, and the best mounted of the courtiers. The fears of Miss Bagot, and the indifference of Rosamond's hunter, soon threw our party far in the rear; for the stag was strong and ran wild, pointing towards the Surrey hills, and, though they contrived to keep the hunt in sight, they were at least a mile distant when the gallant beast was run into and pulled down, on a heathery knoll crowned by a single fir tree, near to which they might see the straggling hunters, as they came up one by one, gathering towards the person of the sovereign.

It was during the gallop, which they were forcing to the best powers of both riders and ridden, that the attention of Armytage was attracted to the strange apparition of a carriage and six horses, one of the huge, cumbersome wheeled caravans of the time, followed by two mounted servants, without liveries or badges, manœuvring hither and thither among the intricate,

deep-soiled, and sunken lanes which intersect the surface of the heath; but he thought nothing of the circumstance, except to point it out to the party, with a laughing expression of wonder as to who could be so fond of the chase as to follow a stag-hunt in a coach and six.

He had scarce spoken of it, when the vehicle and its train were lost to sight in the skirts of a wide tract of hazel coppice, which covered the country for many miles of space, in the direction of Luckfield and St. Leonard's forest; and almost at the same moment, a man in the royal livery galloped up at full speed, exclaiming—"Major Bellarmyne, Major Bellarmyne! His majesty is instant to see Major Bellarmyne!"

There was nothing for it but, however unwilling, to obey; and bowing low to Rosamond and Miss Bagot—"I leave you, my lord," he said, "even as I found you, one cavalier to two fair ladies; a grave charge to protect and entertain them."

And, setting spurs to his fine, thorough-bred charger, which was quite fresh, he was soon at a distance; while the servant in royal livery uncovered as the ladies passed, and dropped into the rear as if to attend them.

Nothing which had passed as yet had excited any surprise in Bellarmyne's mind; but as he rode up at full speed, with his horse a little blown, pulled up, and uncovering close to the king's side stood, evidently waiting orders, the inquiring look of Charles perplexed him.

"So please your majesty, I am here at your orders."

"So I perceive, sir," said Charles laughing. "To what do I owe the pleasure of your presence?"

"Your majesty sent after me."

"Not I, sir, on my honor! When? By whom? I have not even thought about you since I sent you to wait on Miss Bellarmyne."

"Not twenty minutes since, by one of the grooms of the household."

"There is some trick here, sir; or, at the least, some scurvy jest. Odds fish! who hath done this, gentlemen?" cried Charles, looking angrily about him. "I like not such freedoms."

Bellarmyne's eye glanced half-suspiciously over the group; the Chevalier de Grammont was no longer near the king's person. An instinct or intuition made him turn his head and gaze eagerly in the direction where he had last seen the coach and six.

He saw it now issuing, at full gallop, from the coppice, about a quarter of a mile from the spot where he had last seen it, thundering along amid a cloud of dust towards London. Its followers had increased to six persons, and one, who rode the last, was evidently a man of distinction.

"By God!" cried Armytage, forgetful of the presence in which he stood, and striking his clenched hand on his thigh—"By God! he has carried her off!"

"Who, sir? Carried whom off? What do you mean?" cried Charles, too much excited to observe the breach of etiquette.

"Mistress Bellarmyne, sire—the Chevalier de Grammont! Here comes her horse, and Miss Bagot, and my Lord Dynevor to tell us of it."

"Odds fish! he shall repent it," cried the king, very angrily. But Bellarmyne had not waited to hear his reply, but had put spurs to his horse and was already a hundred yards distant, riding, as straight as a crow flies, toward the heads of the coach horses, which were forced to describe a sort of semicircle round the hillock on which the king sat, owing to the intricacies of the lane, and the difficult nature of the ground.

"After him, gentlemen!" cried the king. "Away with you! Crofts, Brouncher, Sydney, Talbot, Tollemache—Ride, ride, my favor to him who stops yonder carriage. Bring them before us, both; and have all care to the lady. Ride, ride, or we shall have hot blood spilt."

But it was in vain that they spurred; for Bellarmyne rode as if the devil drove him.

Two or three broad, bright, bankfull brooks crossed his line, but he swept over them in his stroke as if they were but cart-ruts.

Now a white handkerchief was waved from the window of the carriage. A stiff stone wall, full five feet high, opposed his progress—in went his spurs, down went his elbows, and, with a hard pull at his head, the good horse cleared it. There was now only a smooth slope of two hundred yards, or a little more, between him and the lane, along which the lumbering carriage was rolling and jolting at headlong speed; but the servants, who followed it, were spurring out and drawing their swords as if to intercept him.

But he gave his good horse the rein and spur, shot ahead of the foremost, and in a moment he was abreast of the leaders, calling vehemently on the postillion to stop if he would save his life. But the boy only spurred on the more fiercely, and struck at the young officer with his whip.

In virtue of his office of equerry, holsters were at his saddle-bow, with his pistols loaded. He drew one, and, without relaxing his speed, shot the horse on which the boy rode, through the heart. It bolted upright into the air and fell dead, the others plunged over it, one or two stumbled and went down, the coach was overset.

The next moment De Grammont came up at full speed—

"You have shot my horse—how dare you? You shall answer for it."

"Think yourself lucky," he replied, "that I have not shot you!"

The chevalier answered by an insulting word in French; and scarcely was it uttered before Armytage's sheathed sword crossed his shoulders with a smart blow.

Both sprang to the ground, drew, and their rapiers were crossed in a moment; but by this time the gentlemen, who had followed at the order of Charles, galloped in, one by one.

"Swords drawn in the king's sight," cried Crofts, who came first. "Fie! gentlemen! hold your hands! You are under arrest!"

Rosamond had fainted; but by aid of the ladies of the court, she was soon restored to consciousness, if not to ease of mind.

The first words Charles spoke when the offenders were brought before him were addressed to De Grammont. "Chevalier," he said, "I have heard that my brother, Louis XIV., desires your return to Paris. Major Bellarmyne, you will surrender yourself to the authorities. You have to learn, sir, that swords are not to be drawn in our presence; and that justice and punishment both belong to the king."

CHAPTER VII.

WHITEHALL; A DOUBLE MARRIAGE.

It scarcely need be stated that Rosamond Bellarmyne's letter, which, as we have seen, caused so much grief and anxiety to stout old Sir Reginald, was composed and sent off on the very

morning following the commission of the outrage on Blackheath ; and before the agitated girl had recovered from the consternation and excitement into which this, not unprecedented, violence had thrown her, and before she had, indeed, learned anything accurate concerning the situation of her own affairs, or the intentions of the king.

All, in fact, that she had heard when she wrote wore an adverse aspect. The very outrageousness of such an attempt in the very presence, and almost under the eyes of the king, seemed to carry conviction with it, that the attempt, if not made under his direct sanction, was felt by its perpetrator to be one which would not, at the worst, provoke his anger to evil consequences.

To this consideration De Grammont's long and insolent importunities, the king's undeniable allowance and indulgence of them, until within the last few weeks, were naturally added ; and the helplessness of her own isolated and friendless condition recurred with tenfold strength.

She had heard nothing, when she wrote, of the Chevalier de Grammont's honorary exile from the court of England ; but she had heard, so much more quickly does ill news at all times speed than good, of Major Bellarmyne's imprisonment in Newgate, for breach of privilege ; and to this intelligence was added the heart-rending information that the penalty of his offence was no less than mutilation, by the loss of his right hand, and that in his case there was little prospect of any relaxation, since in addition to the offence of drawing his sword, constructively, in the king's presence, he had gone so far as to strike a nobleman high in the favor of the crown.

Harassed by these feelings, reports, and imaginations, the poor girl wrote, as may be imagined, a letter which would have harassed almost to madness a father even less loving and less

irritable than the broken-spirited and failing cavalier. And little she imagined, as she wrote, that the superb chevalier, whom she pictured to herself as flushed with triumph, burning with brilliant hope, ready for new aggression, and backed by the favor of obsequious majesty, was actually at the moment when she was penning her doleful ditty travelling, as hard as post-horses would carry him, towards Calais, without the least idea whither he should next betake himself; since he well knew that so far from wishing his presence, Louis XIV. was much more likely to commit him to the Bastile than to welcome him to Paris; while the king, whom she supposed the devoted confidant of De Grammont's pleasures, was in reality plotting against him the bitterest pleasantry of which that easy, laughter-loving prince was ever guilty.

Tired in body, for, having no mind to encounter the pleasantries much less the mock condolences of his fellow-courtiers, he had taken horse at daybreak on the morning following the stag-hunt, and ridden post without dismounting, except to change horses, discomfited in his projects, vexed with himself, and angry with the world, De Grammont had reached the Crown Inn at Dover late in the evening, had refused all offers of supper, had drunk deeply, contrary to his custom, and retired to bed, with the intent to forget his cares in a good night's rest.

But even in this reasonable hope the unfortunate Frenchman was frustrated; for, before he had been in bed two hours, a prodigious clatter of hoofs in the court-yard awakened him, and the inn was in a bustle, as it seemed to him, until it was almost morning.

At length he fell asleep; and scarce were his eyes closed before his celebrated valet, Termes, the greatest thief, the most impudent liar, but the best *valet de chambre* living, entered

his chamber with the announcement that two gentlemen were below stairs, who had ridden post from London, in order to have the honor of paying him their compliments before sailing; and that they desired the pleasure of his company, so soon as he had made his toilet.

No further information could be obtained from Termes, although De Grammont could perceive by a single glance at the queer grimaces into which that paragon of servants was delighting himself by contorting his nut-cracking nose and chin, that he was thoroughly aware what was in the wind; and moreover, he shrewdly suspected that it boded himself no good.

No; Monsieur Termes knew nothing about it. He had not seen the gentlemen; only the waiter of the hotel. *He* did not give their names, in fact he did not know them; they had ridden post, and brought no domestic with them. But *apparemment* they were friends of Monsieur le Comte; otherwise why should they have ridden so far to have the honor of paying their compliments? What suit would it please the count to wear—the maroon riding-dress with purple trimmings—or the blue and silver? If it would please the chevalier to bestir himself, for the gentlemen were waiting.

So the chevalier consigned Termes to perdition, and did bestir himself. He put on his blue and silver suit, and his best riding peruke, and his jack-boots and spurs; and so descending to the breakfast-parlor, found there waiting him his dear friend, Count Antony Hamilton, the witty author of his memoirs, and his brother George, both, like himself, booted and spurred, with their riding-swords at their sides; but, unlike him, each with a pair of long-barrelled pistols at his belt.

“Good-morrow to you, chevalier,” they both exclaimed in a breath, as he entered, making him profound congees; “Have you not forgotten something in London?”

"Excuse me, gentlemen," replied the imperturbable Frenchman, with a low bow. "I have forgotten—to marry your sister. So lead on, and let us finish that affair. But I fancy it must be finished in the Tower; for our old friend, Rowley, is sure to send me thither, as soon as he learns that I have returned to London, in the teeth of his gentle hint at honorable exile."

"By no means, count," answered Antony, with a smile and a bow; "in that case we could not have allowed you to return, in spite of your anxiety to do us and our sister this honor. We have a license with us from his majesty for your return and reception at court." And with the words he handed to the count a parchment, which was thus inscribed:

"We hereby grant free permission to the Count de Grammont to return to London, and remain there six days, in prosecution of his lawful affairs; and we accord to him the license to be present at our palace of Whitehall, on the occasion of his betrothal to our gracious consort's maid-of-honor, the beautiful Mistress Elizabeth Hamilton.

"Given at our palace of Whitehall,

"this 16th day of September, 1663.

"CHARLES R."

Whereupon they breakfasted together, each with what appetite he might; and then rode back to London, with much less velocity and bustle than they had ridden down.

Of this, however, Rosamond Bellarmyne knew nothing; much less did she suspect that the genuine, honest-hearted old London merchant had been closeted nearly three hours *tête-à-tête* with the king, much to the wonder of the courtiers, on matters closely connected with herself, though this was the king's

secret; and that thereafter he had gone to Newgate, provided with a document bearing the sign-manual, on the exhibition of which Major Bellarmyne was immediately discharged, his sword being duly restored to him; whereupon he took horse within half an hour, having his pockets filled with a voluminous epistle, as long as a modern title-deed to an estate, and a fat purse, and was riding, when last seen, followed by a couple of stout serving men, at the deliberate pace of an old traveller who has a long journey before him, out of town by the great North Road.

For the benefit of those whose imaginations are not lively enough to forebode what ensued, it may be necessary to state, that before Sir Reginald Pellarmyne's touching letter arrived at the house of Nicholas in the Minories, the emperor's young soldier, now the king's officer, Armytage Bellarmyne, had alighted at the gates of the old abbey, well furnished with credentials, not from his father only, but from the Majesty of England, backing his suit for the fair hand of the maid-of-honor.

To these also it may be necessary to say, that the old chevalier was too implicit a believer in the doctrine of passive obedience, to dream of disputing the will of the king; that the good Dowager of Throckmorton was already in London, when the old baronet, cured of his gout by the best of all remedies, a dose of unexpected happiness, dismounted at the palace-gates, to claim the brief possession of his fair child, whom he was soon to give away for ever—that the two kinsmen, so long and unnecessarily estranged, were never estranged more; and that on the festive and joyous day when two marriages were celebrated in the chapel of Whitehall, if the first and most famous was that of the notorious Count de Grammont with the beautiful Miss Hamilton, the most interesting, and, as after days

proved, the happiest, was that of Major Armytage Bellarmyne to Rosamond, the no less beautiful daughter of Reginald, first Viscount of Bellarmyne.

To the world, who have heard only of the recklessness, the heartlessness, the worldly coldness, ill redeemed by his facile and frivolous good-nature, of the Second Charles of England, it may appear surprising ; but the tenants of the old house, so happily reinstated, of Bellarmyne, as well as the restored avenue and the redeemed acres, truthful although mute witnesses, still tell this simple tale of "The King's Gratitude."

The Lady Alice Lisle;

1685



THE LADY ALICE LISLE.

It was late on a dark summer's night, the day following the disastrous field of Sedgemoor, on which the forces of the king, under the incapable voluptuary Feversham, had annihilated the rebel army of Monmouth, owing scarcely less to the incapacity and want of judgment of the leader himself, than to the cowardice of his general of the horse, Lord Gray, of Werk. The scene lay amid the wooded hills of Hampshire, or that skirt of the country which is nearest to the confines of Wiltshire. The weather was wild and stormy, though in the height of summer; the wind blowing very freshly in heavy gusts from the southwest, with occasional squalls of sharp, driving rain. The skies were very dim and gloomy, although the moon was nearly at the full, so densely were they overlaid with masses of thick grey clouds, drifting onward, still onward, layer above layer, before the driving storm, so as to blot the stars entirely from the visible firmament, and only at times to suffer a faint lack-lustre gleam of the waning moon to struggle through the rifts of the changeful vapors. Dark, however, and inauspicious as the night would have been pronounced by ordinary wayfarers, it was yet hailed, for the causes which would have rendered it obnoxious to others, by two pedestrians, who, seemingly almost overdone with fatigue, travel-stained, and splashed from

head to foot with fifty different shades of mud and clay, continued to plod sturdily though slowly onward, through the half-forest scene, amid which ran the narrow and unfrequented country road by which they were travelling.

One of these men, though he carried ostensibly no arms, nor wore any of the regular trappings or insignia of the soldier, had yet something in his port, carriage, and demeanor, which at once indicated, to an experienced eye, that his proper profession was that of arms. His broad-leafed hat was ornamented with a band and feather, and though he was on foot he wore high horseman's boots, from which, either in his haste or forgetfulness, he had neglected to remove a pair of heavy spurs.

The other person was older, less athletic in his build, and was evidently far more wearied than his stouter companion, and it was with pain and difficulty that he struggled feebly through the deep mire and broken ruts of the ill-made country road. He was dressed in black, with the band of a non-conformist clergyman about his neck, and the close fitting black skull-cap, which had procured for his sect the contemptuous name of crop-car, under his steeple-crowned hat.

"It is no use," he said at length, after stumbling two or three times so badly that he had all but fallen; "I can go no further. Though my life depended on it, I could not another mile."

"Your life does depend on it," replied the other, shortly; "of a surety the avenger of blood is close at our heels, and the broad-swords of the Blues are just as thirsty for the blood of a preacher of the word, whom they call a trumpeter of sedition, as for that of a man-at-arms. Up! up! friend, and onward! give me your arm, and let me lead you; nay, if it must needs be, I will carry you. For the house of the woman of Israel, whom men call the Lady Alice, cannot but be within

a short half mile, and there shall we have shelter, for the asking, until this tyranny be over-past."

The preacher, who had sat down utterly exhausted on a bank by the wayside, replied only with a groan to this friendly exhortation, but he arose to make another effort for his life, and with the assistance of the stalwart arm of his younger and hardier companion, toiled onward by a steepish ascent which lay before them, stumbling at every step, and declaring his inability to proceed even for the sake of life.

As they arrived, however, at the summit of the hill, a glimmering light met their eyes, seen faintly and at intervals through the foliage of the thick woodlands, which filled the slopes and bottom of a small lap of land into which they were descending, watered by a rapid and tumultuous brook, swollen by the recent rains, whose murmurs came up to their ears hoarse and menacing.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed the soldier, as he saw the friendly gleam, "we are saved! That light burns in the lattice of the lady, the pious relict of the God-fearing patriot, John Lisle. The sounds of the brook make me sure of it. Courage, my friend, a few more steps, and our toils and perils shall be over."

"God send it be so," said the preacher. "But think you she shall give us shelter when she knows who we are, and from what deed we come?"

"Ay! do I," replied the other, confidently. "There is that in the heart of Alice Lisle that would not suffer her to yield up even her most deadly enemy to the sword of the pursuer. She is all woman charity, and saintly tenderness and mercy. Besides, for her there is little danger; she is known through the land for her loyalty, and for her deeds of love to the cavaliers in the days of their tribulation. No one, by her

prayers and intercession, nay, by her active aid, saved more lives of the king's party than the Lady Alice. No one shed more tears, or more openly, over the death of King Charles, when to shed tears in itself for such a cause was perilous. Nay! had John Lisle listened to her counsels, or yielded to her entreaties, he never had borne the name of regicide, or perished in a foreign land by the knives of assassins for his zeal in the cause. No officer of the enemy would ever think of searching in her premises for rebels, and were she even convicted of harboring them, the country with one voice, Tory as much as Whig, would cry aloud in her behalf. Come on, we are saved, I tell you. But it needs not to tell her whence we come. She knows you for a nonconformist, and may well believe that you are pursued for preaching without license."

As he said these words they had come to the banks of the flooded stream, which, ordinarily a mere thread of water, was crossed by a ford scarce ankle-deep in usual weather. Now it was a wild roaring torrent, at least waist deep, and bridgeless. Still there was no alternative; it must be crossed or they must die on the hither bank so soon as the cavalry, which were scouring the country on every side in merciless pursuit, should come up with them.

The soldier breasted it the first, and bravely; for though the current was so strong as almost to take him off his legs, he persisted, forced his way to the further side, which he reached unharmed, and then, after pausing a moment to recover his breath, returned to assist his weaker and more timid companion across the dangerous ford. It required some persuasion to induce the divine, who was far more daring in resistance to the authority of men, and defiance of the perils of the law, than in endurance of fatigue and suffering,

or opposition to physical dangers, to venture himself in the deep and dangerous flood; nor, indeed, was it strange that a person of weak nerves and inconsiderable bodily force should prefer the incurring of a distant and uncertain danger, to rushing into what would seem immediate death.

The energies of the military man were however victorious over the fears and hesitations of the preacher, but it was not without some gentle violence that he compelled his friend to trust to his own courage and power, which he asserted were fully equal to the preservation of both from a greater danger than any threatened by the sullen eddies of the swollen brook.

His actions indeed made good his assertions, but it was not without a severe struggle, and the exertion of every nerve to the very utmost, that he succeeded in dragging out his helpless and half-drowned companion on the further shore; for, offering no resistance to the stream, and opposing only an inert body to its force, he stumbled in the hard channel and was swept down the stream, dragging his more robust auxiliary helplessly along with him for some yards. It is doubtful, indeed, whether either of the two could have escaped, for the soldier showed no disposition to extricate himself at the sacrifice of the other, had not the branches of a large willow tree, growing in the fence through an opening of which the stream passed into the adjoining fields, swept the surface of the waters, and fallen by chance into the extended hand of the stronger of the fugitives. By aid of this, he soon reached the dry ground, and dragged out the groaning and exhausted preacher, whom, finding that he was now really unable to proceed, he hoisted on his shoulders, and, weary as he was himself, bore for nearly half a mile to the gate, which gave access through a low brick wall to the demesnes of the Lady Alice Lisle.

It was a small, old-fashioned red-brick hall, with the window casings and the angles faced with white stone; a small courtyard, with smoothly shaved turf and a few formal evergreens, lay upon it; and behind, half screened by a belt of plantation, were seen indistinctly the out-houses attached to the dwelling of a rural proprietor in those days, stables, and granaries, and pigeon-house, and barns, and malt-house, while the baying of several large dogs from the farm-yards showed that the stock was not left unprotected.

The light which the fugitives had seen from a distance still burned calmly at the window of a small parlor to the right of the door, and as they drew nearer to the house, they could distinguish the figure of the lady bending over a large volume, which they at once recognised as the bible.

"It is a good omen," said the faint-hearted priest. "One so employed shall scarce refuse Christian charity and succor."

"I tell you that she would not do it, were she assured that she should lose her own life thereby."

"Verily, a sainted woman," snuffled the preacher; "and worthy to be held a mother of Israel."

"She is worthy to be held a right noble English lady," answered Nelthorpe, abruptly, as if he were half disgusted either by the cowardice or the cant of his companion, whom he addressed, now that they were for the moment in a place of safety, as master, though with far less warmth of manner than he had done while they were both in actual danger.

At the first summons, the door of the hall was opened by a very old grey-headed serving man, whom Nelthorpe instantly addressed by name, as an old acquaintance, bidding him tell the lady that he and pious and learned Master Hicks were at her door belated and weary wanderers, and fugitives for conscience sake, with men of Belial at their heels, praying

for a morsel of food, and a night's lodging until the morrow morning, when they would go on their way refreshed and thankful.

The old servitor shook his head doubtfully, and seemed reluctant to be the bearer of such a message to his mistress, who he, perhaps, foresaw with the preciseness of aged affection, might be endangered in consequence. But the Lady Alice had heard something of what was passing without, and while the old man was hesitating, opened the parlor door and made her appearance in the hall, inquiring what was the matter, and who were the visitors at so late an hour.

She was a very aged woman, with the still abundant tresses of her snow-white hair braided plainly across her brows, beneath her stiffly-starched muslin cap. Her face, however, still retained traces of uncommon former beauty, and the benevolence, tranquillity, and serene mildness which beamed from every lineament, rendered her face still singularly pleasant and attractive. Her figure, which was tall and slender, was still full of grace, and her every movement was made with that easy elegance which is perhaps the most distinctive proof of a high and gentle education, and which we never fail to attribute to the consciousness of good birth and breeding, and to the influence of a mind at ease with itself and at peace with others.

Her voice was low and gentle, and though she spoke half reproachfully to the old servant for his churlishness and want of charity in hesitating to admit men in such weary plight and peril, the softness of her tones and the quietude of her manner made her words seem anything rather than a censure.

A change of raiment was speedily supplied to the fugitives, with one of whom, Nelthorpe, she was personally, though

slightly acquainted, while the other she knew by reputation only, and that, perhaps, not too favorably, as a very zealous, somewhat intolerant, and confessedly rather turbulent dissenting minister.

The Lady Alice was herself a sincere loyalist, and a devout and devoted member of the church of England, though it had been her lot in early life to be mated with an independent and a regicide, whose errors, whose crimes, and whose untimely death had steeped her life in sorrow, and blanched her dark hair immaturity, though it had failed to cloud the calm and religious serenity of her composed and gentle spirit. Still, neither in the political nor the religious creed of the Lady Alice, was there one touch of intolerance; and so full was her heart of that truly feminine chivalry, of that almost maternal sense of hospitable duty which ever prompts woman to defend and protect the helpless, that it is probable that, as Nelthorpe said, had her worst enemies, nay, the very assassins of her husband, stood in her threshold claiming protection from the avenger of the blood, hard on the traces, she would have granted it, womanly pity conquering human resentment, and the sense of duty prevailing over all fear of consequences.

Thus, though she did not greatly admire or respect the character of her nocturnal visitants, and perhaps half-suspected the reasons of their desperate position, she never thought for one moment of denying them asylum against their pursuers. Perhaps she did not reflect on the consequences to herself; perhaps she believed that her character, her well-known loyalty and admitted service to the cause of the cavaliers, when that cause was at the lowest, would protect her, should her deed of mercy be discovered: but had she been fully aware of all that was to follow, certain it is that in no respect would her conduct have been altered.

So soon as they were drily and comfortably clad, meat and wine were set before them, and when they were thoroughly warmed and recruited, as they still persisted in declaring themselves in mortal peril of pursuit, although when they would have entered into particular details, the lady resolutely refused to listen; when the time for retiring had arrived, they were conducted to such hiding places as the old house afforded—Hicks to a secret chamber within the thickness of the wall, having its entrance from the back of a fire-place in one of the upper rooms, and Nelthorpe to an inner arched recess of the malt-house, the mouth of which was in part concealed by a pile of grain heaped against it; and here, with good store of mattresses and bedding, they were left to enjoy the delight of sound and secure slumbers, after four and twenty hours of uninterrupted toil and terror.

So soundly did they sleep, and till so late an hour, that the sun was near the meridian, and neither of them had yet made his appearance, the lady respecting their fatigue, and forbidding that they should be aroused; when suddenly sounds were heard, which made them start in terror from their couches. The long blast of a cavalry trumpet was succeeded by the trampling of a troop of horse, and a loud and simultaneous knocking at all the doors of the house, which was surrounded by a force of dismounted troopers with carbines in their hands, their officers demanding admittance in the king's name, which, as it could not be resisted, was immediately, if not cordially accorded.

The garments of the fugitives, which were still drying by the kitchen fire, were instantly discovered and identified as those of Nelthorpe and Hicks, both of whom, as the lady now learned, positively, for the first time, had borne arms against the king at Sedgemoor, and being proclaimed traitors, she was

herself liable to the pains and penalties of high treason, for harboring and secreting them. A vigorous search followed, and as the general character of such hiding places, in the old halls and manor houses of that day, had become almost universally known during the late civil wars, in the course of which many of the cavaliers had found protection in them from their puritan pursuers, it was not long before Hicks and Nelthorpe were both discovered and made prisoners, and the Lady Alice herself was commanded to hold herself as attached for high treason, and to prepare for immediate removal to the county town, where an extraordinary circuit was about to be held for the effectual suppression of the rebellion, and the extirpation of the rebels. It was only as an especial favor that the aged lady was permitted the use of her own carriage to convey her to the prison, in which she was immured like a common felon, to wait the arrival of the infamous Jefferies, who was already appointed to hold the circuit, known afterwards as the Bloody Assizes, by the cold-blooded and barbarous tyrant, the worst man and most atrocious king who ever sat upon the throne of England.

It may well be said that her fate was decided before she was brought to trial, for, although it was proved beyond question that the venerable lady—who pleaded her own cause, unaided by counsel, confronting the insolent and shameful abuse and ravings of Jefferies with meek and calm self-confidence—was not even aware that the battle of Sedgemoor had been fought on any grounds beyond mere popular rumor; much less that either of the prisoners had borne arms in that affair; though she had sent her own son to support the royal cause, and fight against the very rebels she was now accused of harboring; though it had not been proved in any court that the men she now arraigned for sheltering were actually traitors; though

the jury twice presented favorable verdicts, they were sent back with roars and bellowings of almost frantical abuse by the monster Jefferies, who called them knaves and villains, brow-beat the witness with foul-mouthed vituperation, and claimed the conviction of the prisoner, on the ground that her husband had officiated as one of the regicide judges—a fact not proved in court, and irrelevant, had it been proved—until at length driven to their wits' ends, half crazed, and wholly terrified by the furious and appalling menaces of the chief justice, they at length brought in a verdict of guilty, though coupled with the strongest recommendation to mercy. Utterly disregarding this recommendation, the monster sentenced her at once to be burned alive on the following day, and it was only by the strong remonstrances of all the clergy, and especially of the bishop of Salisbury, a most loyal prelate, who had lent his own carriage horses to draw the royal artillery to Sedgemoor, that he was compelled to renounce his determination of putting her—an aged and most venerable woman, of the most blameless life, and now convicted only for one of those acts of womanish mercy, for which, in the darkest of the middle ages, and in the first strife of the bloodiest civil wars, no woman had ever been capitally punished—to a death the most horrible, without allowing an appeal to the mercy, if not to the justice of the king.

The appeal was made—intercession, entreaties of the strongest, solicitations of the most urgent, were offered, but the savage and cowardly bigot was, as ever, merciless—the only mercy he would grant was the commutation of her punishment from the stake and fagots to the block and axe—for he had promised Jefferies, he said, that he would not pardon.

So, in the clearness of her innocence, conscious of her justification on high, she bowed her grey head dauntlessly to the

block, and died indeed a heroine, and little less than a saint and martyr, on the very same day on which Elizabeth Garnet, an ancient matron of the anabaptist persuasion, was actually burned to death, almost under the eyes of the ruthless James, for a like offence, at Smithfield. They were the first women, it is believed, that ever suffered in England for any similar offence—they are the last who have been capitally punished therein for any political crime, and the last they will be for ever. Their fame grows brighter and their memories dearer, every day, while that of the murderer becomes blacker hourly, as fresh investigations bring forth fresh proofs of his utter infamy. It is something to know that he was punished, even in this world, as few men ever have been punished—that he was deserted, at his utmost need, by his own children, and that he died the most abject of things—not of men—a pauper king, subsisting on the charity of his own country's foes.

Ditton-in-the-Dale ;

THE DAYS OF JAMES II.

1687.



DITTON-IN-THE-DALE;

THE DAYS OF JAMES II.

CHAPTER I.

It has been gravely stated by an Italian writer of celebrity, that "the very atrocity of the crimes which are therein committed, proves that in Italy the growth of man is stronger and more vigorous, and nearer to the perfect standard of manhood than in any other country."

A strange paradox, truly, but not uningenious—at least for a native of that "purple land, where law secures not life," who would work out of the very reproach, an argument of honor to his country. If it be true, however, that proneness to the commission of unwonted and atrocious crime is to be held a token of extraordinary vigor—vigor of nerve, of temperament, of passion, of physical development—in a race of men, then surely must the Anglo-Norman breed, under all circumstances of time, place, and climate, be singularly destitute of all those qualities—nay, singularly frail, effeminate, and incomplete.

For it is an undoubted fact, both of the past and present history of that great and still increasing race, whether limited to the narrow bounds of the island realm which gave it being, or

extended to the boundless breadth of isles, and continents, and oceans, which it has filled with its arms, its arts, its industry, its language—it is, I say, an undoubted fact, that those dreadful and sanguinary crimes, forming a class apart and distinct of themselves, engendered for the most part by morbid passions, love, lust, jealousy, and revenge, which are of daily occurrence in the southern countries of Europe, Asia, and America, are almost unknown in those happier lands, where English laws prevail, with English liberty and language.

It is to this that must be ascribed the fact, that, in the very few instances where crimes of this nature have occurred in England or America, the memory of them is preserved with singular pertinacity, the smallest details handed down from generation to generation, and the very spots in which they have occurred, how much soever altered or improved in the course of ages, haunted, as if by an actual presence, by the horror and the scent of blood; while on the other hand the fame of ordinary deeds of violence and rapine seems almost to be lost before the lives of the perpetrators are run out.

One, and almost, I believe, a singular instance of this kind—for I would not dignify the brawls and assassinations which have disgraced some of our southern cities, the offspring of low principles and an unregulated society, by comparing them to the class of crimes is question, which imply even in their atrocity a something of perverted honor, of extravagant affection, or at least of not ignoble passion—is the well-known Beauchamp tragedy of Kentucky, a tale of sin and horror which has afforded a theme to the pens of several distinguished writers, and the details of which are as well known on the spot at present, as if years had not elapsed since its occurrence. And this, too, in a country prone above all others, from the migratory habits of its population, to cast aside all tradition, and to lose within a very

few years the memory of the greatest and most illustrious events upon the very stage of their occurrence.

It is not, therefore, wonderful that in England, where the immobility of the population, the reverence for antiquity, and the great prevalence of oral tradition, induced probably at first by the want of letters, cause the memory of even past trifles to dwell for ages in the breasts of the simple and moral people, any deed of romantic character, any act of unusual atrocity, any crime prompted by unusual or extraordinary motives, should become, as it were, part and parcel of the place wherein it was wrought; that the leaves of the trees should whisper it to the winds of evening; that the echoes of the lonely hills should repeat it; that the waters should sigh a burthen to its strain; and that the very night should assume a deeper shadow, a more horrid gloom, from the awe of the unforgotten sin.

I knew a place in my boyhood, thus haunted by the memory of strange crime; and whether it was merely the terrible romance of the story, or the wild and gloomy character of the scenery endowed with a sort of natural fitness to be the theatre of terrible events, or yet again the union of the two, I know not; but it produced upon my mind a very powerful influence, amounting to a species of fascination, which constantly attracted me to the spot, although when there, the weight of the tradition and the awe of the scene produced a sense of actual pain.

The place to which I allude was but a few miles distant from the celebrated public school, at which I passed the happiest days of a not uneventful life, and was within an easy-walk of the college limits; so that when I had attained that favored eminence, known as the sixth form, which allows its happy occupants to roam the country, free from the fear of masters, provided only they attend at appointed hours, it was my frequent habit to stroll away from the noisy playing-fields through the

green hedgerow lanes, or to scull my wherry over the smooth surface of the silver Thames, towards the scene of dark tradition ; and there to lap myself in thick-coming fancies, half sad, half sweet, yet terrible withal, and in their very terror attractive, until the call of the homeward rooks, and the lengthened shadows of the tall trees on the green sward, would warn me that I too must hie me back with speed, or pay the penalty of undue delay.

Now, as the story has in itself, apart from the extraneous interest with which a perfect acquaintance with its localities may have invested it in my eyes, a powerful and romantic character ; as its catastrophe was no less striking than un-English ; and as the passions which gave rise to it were at once the strongest and the most general—though rarely prevailing, at least among us Anglo-Normans, to so fearful an extent—I am led to hope that others may find in it something that may enchain their attention for a time, though it may not affect them as it has me with an influence, unchanged by change of scene, unaltered by the lapse of time, which alters all things.

I propose, therefore, to relate it, as I heard it first from an old superannuated follower of the family, which, owning other though not fairer demesnes in some distant county, had never more used Ditton-in-the-Dale as their dwelling-place, although well nigh two centuries had elapsed since the transaction which had scared them away from their polluted household gods.

But first, I must describe briefly the characteristics of the scenery, without which a part of my tale would be hardly comprehensible, while the remarkable effect produced by the coincidence, if I may so express myself, between the nature of the deed, and the nature of the place, would be lost entirely.

In the first place, then, I must premise that the name of Ditton-in-the-Dale is in a great measure a misnomer, as the

house and estate which bear that name, are situated on what a visiter would be at first inclined to call a dead level, but on what is in truth a small secondary undulation, or hollow, in the broad, flat valley through which the father of the English rivers, the royal-towered Thames, pursues, as Gray sang,

The turf, the flowers, the shades among,
His silver-winding way.

But so destitute is all that country of any deep or well defined valleys, much less abrupt glens or gorges, that any hollow containing a tributary stream, which invariably meanders in slow and sluggish reaches through smooth, green meadow-land, is dignified with the name of dale, or valley. The country is, however, so much intersected by winding lanes, bordered with high straggling white-thorn hedges full of tall timber trees, is subdivided into so many small fields, all inclosed with similar fences, and is diversified with so many woods and clumps of forest trees, that you lose sight of the monotony of its surface, in consequence of the variety of its vegetation, and of the limited space which the eye can comprehend at any one time.

The lane by which I was wont to reach the demesne of Ditton, partook in an eminent degree of this character, being very narrow, winding about continually without any apparent cause, almost completely embowered by the tall hawthorn hedges, and the yet taller oaks and ashes which grew along their lines, making, when in full verdure, twilight of noon itself, and commanding no view whatever of the country through which it ran, except when a field-gate or cart-track opened into it, affording a glimpse of a lonely meadow, bounded, perhaps, by a deep wood-side.

On either hand of this lane was a broad, deep ditch, both of them quite unlike any other ditches I have ever seen. Their

banks were irregular; and it would seem evident that they had not been dug for any purposes of fencing or inclosure; and I have sometimes imagined, from their varying width and depth—for in places they were ten feet deep, and three times as broad, and at others but a foot or two across, and containing but a few inches of water—that their beds had been hollowed out to get marl or gravel for the convenience of the neighboring cultivators.

Be this as it may, they were at all times brimful of the clearest and most transparent water I ever remember to have seen—never turbid even after the heaviest rains; and though bordered by water-flags, and tapestried in many places by the broad, round leaves of the white and yellow water-lilies, never corrupted by a particle of floating scum or green duckweed.

Whether they were fed by secret springs I know not; or whether they communicated by sluices or side-drains with the neighboring Thames; I never could discover any current or motion in their still, glassy waters, though I have wandered by their banks a hundred times, watching the red-finned roach and silvery dace pursue each other among the shadowy lily leaves—now startling a fat yellow frog from the marge, and following him as he dived through the limpid blackness to the very bottom—now starting in my own turn, as a big water-rat would swim from side to side, and vanish in some hole of the marly bank—and now endeavoring to catch the great azure-bodied, gauze-winged dragon-flies, as they shot to and fro on their poised wings, pursuing, kites of the insect race, some of the smaller ephemera.

It was those quiet, lucid waters, coupled with the exceeding shadiness of the trees, and its very unusual solitude—I have walked it, I suppose, from end to end at least a hundred times, and I never remember to have met so much even as a peasant

returning from his daily labor, or a country maiden tripping to the neighboring town—that gave its character, and I will add its charm, to this half pastoral, half sylvan lane. For nearly three miles it ran in one direction, although, as I have said, with many devious turns and seemingly unnecessary angles, and through that length it did not pass within the sound of one farm-yard, or the sight of one cottage chimney. But to make up for this, of which it was, indeed, a consequence, the nightingales were so bold and familiar that they might be heard all day long filling the air with their delicious melodies, not waiting, as in more frequented spots, the approach of night, whose dull ear to charm with amorous ravishment; nay, I have seen them perched in full view on the branches, gazing about them fearless with their full black eyes, and swelling their emulous throats in full view of the spectator.

Three miles passed, the lane takes a sudden turn to the northward, having previously run for the most part east and west; and here, in the inner angle, jutting out suddenly from a dense thicket of hawthorns and hazels, an old octagonal summer-house, with a roof shaped like an extinguisher, projects into the ditch, which here expands into a little pool some ten or twelve yards over in every direction, and perhaps deeper than at any other point of its course.

Beyond the summer-house there is a little esplanade of green turf, faced with a low wall towards the ditch, allowing the eye to run down a long, narrow avenue of gigantic elm-trees, meeting at the top in the perfect semblance of a Gothic aisle, and bordered on each hand by hedges of yew, six feet at least in height, clipped into the form and almost into the solidity of a wall. At the far end of this avenue, which must be nearly two-thirds of a mile in length, one can discern a glimpse of a

formal garden, and beyond that, of some portion of what seems to be a large building of red brick.

At the extremity of the esplanade and little wall, there grows an enormous oak, not very tall, but with an immense girth of trunk, and such a spread of branches that it completely overshadows the summer-house, and overhangs the whole surface of the small pool in front of it. Thenceforth, the tall and tangled hedge runs on, as usual denying all access of the eye, and the deep, clear ditch all access of the foot, to the demesnes within ; until at the distance of perhaps a mile and a quarter, a little bridge crosses the latter, and a green gate, with a pretty rustic lodge beside it, gives entrance to a smooth lawn, with a gravel-road running across it, and losing itself on the farther side, in a thick belt of woodland.

It is, however, with the summer-house that I have to do principally, for it is to it that the terror of blood has clung through the lapse of years, as the scent of the Turkish attar is said to cling, indestructible, to the last fragment of the vessel which had once contained it.

When first I saw that small lonely pavilion, I had heard nothing of the strange tradition which belonged to it, yet as I looked on the plastered walls, all covered with spots of damp and mildew, on the roof overrun with ivy, in masses so wildly luxuriant as almost to conceal the shape—on the windows, one in each side of the octagon, closed by stout jalousies, which had been once green with paint, but were now green with damp and vegetable mould, a strange feeling, half of curiosity and half of terror, came over me, mixed with that singular fascination of which I have spoken, which seemed to deny me any rest until I should have searched out the mystery—for I felt sure that mystery there was—connected with that summer-house, so desolate and so fast lapsing into ruin, while the hedges

and gardens within appeared well cared for, and in trim cultivation.

I well remember the first time I beheld that lonely and deserted building. It was near sunset, on as lovely a summer evening as ever shed its soft light on the earth; the air was breathless; the sky cloudless; thousands of swallows were upon the wing, some skimming the limpid surface of those old ditches, others gliding on balanced pinions so far aloft in the darkening firmament that the eye could barely discern them.

The nightingales were warbling their rich, melancholy notes from every brake and thicket; the bats had come forth, and were flitting to and fro on their leathern wings under the dark trees; but the brilliant dragon-flies and all the painted tribe of butterflies had vanished already, and another race, the insects of the night, had taken their places.

The rich scent of the new-mown hay loaded the air with fragrance, and vied with the odors of the eglantine and honeysuckle, which, increased by the falling dew, steamed up like incense to the evening skies.

I was alone, and thoughtful; for the time, although sweet and delicious, had nothing in it gay or joyous; the lane along which I was strolling was steeped in the fast increasing shadows, for although the air aloft was full of sunshine, and the topmost leaves of the tall ashes shimmered like gold in the late rays, not a single beam penetrated the thick hedgerows, or fell upon the sandy horse-road. The water in the deep ditches looked as black as night, and the plunge of the frogs into their cool recesses startled the ear amid the solitude and stillness of the place.

It was one of those evenings, in a word, which calls up, we know not why, a train of thought not altogether sad, nor wholly tender, but calm and meditative and averse to action. I had

been wandering along thus for nearly an hour, musing deeply all the while, yet perfectly unconscious that I was musing; much more what was the subject of my meditations, when coming suddenly to the turn of the lane, the old summer-house met my eyes, and almost startled me, so little did I expect in that place to see anything that should recall to my mind the dwellings or the vicinity of man.

The next minute I began to scrutinize, and to wonder—for it was evident that this building must be an appendage to the estate of some gentleman or person of degree, and, knowing all the families of note in that neighborhood, I was well assured that no one dwelt here of sufficient position to be the owner of what appeared at first sight to be a noble property.

Anxious as I was, however, to effect my entrance into that enchanted ground, I could discover no means of doing so; for the depth of the water effectually cut off all access to the hedgerow banks, even if there had been any prospect of forcing a passage through the tangled thorn-bushes beyond. Before I could find any solution to my problem, the fast thickening shadows admonished me that I must beat my retreat; and it was only by dint of redoubled speed that I reached college in time to escape the consequences of absence from roll-call.

An early hour of the evening found me at my post on the following day; for having a direct object now in view, I wasted no time on the road, and the sun was still some distance above the horizon when I reached the summer-house.

It had been my hope, as I went along, that I might find some shallow spot, with a corresponding gap in the hedge, before reaching the place, by means of which I might turn the defences, and take the enemy in the rear; but it was all in vain; and I came upon the ground without discovering any opening

by which an animal larger than a rat could enter the forbidden ground.

Difficulty, it is well known, heightens desire; and, if I wished before, I was now determined that I would get in. Quickening my pace, I set off at a smart run to reconnoitre the defences beyond, but having found nothing that favored my plans in some half mile or so, I again returned, now bent on forcing my way, even if I should be compelled to undress, and swim across the pool to the further side.

Before having recourse to this last step, however, I reconnoitred my ground somewhat more narrowly than before, and soon discovered that one of the main limbs of the great oak shot quite across the pool, and extended some little distance on my side over terra firma.

It is true that the nearer extremity of the branch was rather of the slenderest, to support the weight even of a boy, and that the lowest point was a foot or two above my head. But what of that? I was young and active in those days, and somewhat bold withal; and without a spice of danger, where were the pleasure or excitement of adventure?

It did not take me long to make up my mind, and before I had well thought of the risk, I had swung myself up into the branches, and was creeping, with even less difficulty than I had anticipated, along the great gnarled bough above the mirrored pool.

Danger, in fact, there was none; for slender as the extremities appeared, they were tough English oak; and the parent branch once gained, would have supported the weight of Otus and Ephialtes, and all their giant crew, much more of one slight Etonian.

In five minutes, or less, I had reached the fork of the trunk, and, swarming down on the further side, stood in the full fruition of my hopes, on that enchanted ground.

It was, as I had expected to find it, a singular and gloomy spot; the tall elm trees which formed the avenue, and the black wall of clipped yew which followed their course, diverging to the right and left, formed a semicircle, the chord of which was the low wall and hawthorn hedge, the summer-house standing, as I entered, in the angle on my left hand.

Although, as I have said, the sun was still high in heaven, the little area was almost dark already; and it was difficult, indeed, to conjecture for what end the wisdom of our ancestors had planted a sun-dial in the centre of the grass-plat, where it seemed physically impossible that a chance sunbeam should ever strike it, to tell the hour.

If it had not been for the narrow open space between the oak tree and the summer house, the little lawn would even now have been as black as night; as it was, a sort of misty-grey twilight, increased, perhaps, by the thin vapors rising from the tranquil pool, filled all its precincts; and beyond these, stretching away in long perspective until the arch at the further end seemed dwindled to the size of a needle's eye, was the long aisle of gloomy foliage, as massive and impenetrable to any ray of light as the stone arches of a Gothic cloister.

The only thing that conveyed an idea of gaiety or life to the cold and tomb-like scenery, was the glimpse of bright sunshine which lay on the open garden at the extremity of the elm-walk, with the gaudy and glowing hues, indistinctly seen in the distance, of some summer flowers.

Yet even this was not all unmixed with something of melancholy, for the contrast of the gay sunbeams and bright flowers only rendered the gloom more apparent, and like a convent-garden, seemed to awaken cravings after the joyous world without, diminishing nothing of the sorrow and monotony within.

But I was not in those days much given to moralizing, or to the investigation of my own inward feelings.

I had come thither to inquire, to see, to learn, to find out things—not causes. And perceiving at one glance that my first impression was correct, that the grass-plots were recently mown, the gravel-walks newly rolled and spotless of weeds, the tall yew hedges assiduously clipped into the straightest and most formal lines; that everything, in short, displayed the most heedful tendance, the neatest cultivation, with the exception of the summer-pavilion, which evidently was devoted to decay, I became but the more satisfied that there was some mystery, and the more resolute to probe it to the core.

It was quite clear that when that garden was laid out, and that avenue planted, how many years ago the giant size of the old elms denoted, the summer-house was the meaning of the whole design. The avenue had no object but to lead to it, the little lawn no purpose but to receive it. Doubly strange, therefore, did it seem that *these* should be kept up in all their trimness—that suffered to fall into decay.

It was the tragedy of Hamlet, with Hamlet's part omitted!

I stood for a little while wondering, and half overcome by a sort of indescribable fanciful superstition. A cloud had come over the sun, the nightingales had ceased to sing, and there was not a sound of any kind to be heard, except the melancholy murmur of the summer air in the tree-tops.

In a moment, however, the transitory spell was shaken off, and, once more the bold and reckless schoolboy, I turned to the performance of my self-imposed task.

The summer-house, as I have said, was octagon, three of its sides, with a window in each, jutting out into the clear pool, and three, with a door in the centre, and a window on each side, fronting the little lawn. But, alas! the windows were all

secured with jalousies, strongly bolted and barred from within, and the door was secured by a lock, the key of which was absent.

A short examination showed, however, that the door was held by no bolts at the top or bottom ; and the rusty condition of both lock and hinges rendered it probable that it would not stand a very violent assault.

Wherefore, retreating some twenty paces, I ran at it *more Etonensi*, at the top of my speed, planted the sole of my foot even and square against the key-hole, with the whole impetus of my charge, and had the satisfaction of feeling the door fly open in an instant, while a jingling clatter within showed that my entrance had been effected with no greater damage to the premises than the starting of the staple into which the bolt of the lock shot.

Having entered thus, my first task was to repair damages, which was effected in five minutes, by driving the staple into its old place by aid of a great stone ; my second, to provide means for future visits, which was as speedily managed by driving back the bolt of the lock with the same great stone ; and my third, to look eagerly and curiously about me. To do this more effectually, I soon opened the two windows looking upon the lawn, and let in the light, for the first time, I fancy, in many a year, to that deserted room.

If I had marvelled much before I entered, much more did I marvel now ; for although everything within showed marks of the utmost negligence and decay, though spiders had woven their webs in every angle, though mildew and damp mould had defaced the painted walls, though the gilding was black and tarnished, though the dust lay thick on the furniture, still I had never seen anything in my life, except the state-rooms at Hampton Court and Windsor Castle, which

could have vied with this pavilion in the splendor of its original decoration.

Its area was about thirty feet in diameter, and in height nearly the same, with a domed roof, richly fretted with what had once been golden scroll-work upon an azure ground. The walls were painted, as even *I* could discover, by the hand of a master, with copies from Guido and Caracci, in compartments bordered with massive gilded scroll-work, the ground between the panels having been originally, like the ceiling, of bright azure. The window-frames had been gilded; and the inside of the door painted, like the walls, in azure, with pictures of high merit in the panels. Every side of the octagon but two, the opposite walls to the right and left, was occupied by windows or a door; but that to the right was filled by a mantel-piece, exquisitely wrought with Caryatides in white Carrara marble, with a copy of the Aurora above it, while the space opposite to it had been occupied by a superb mirror, reaching from the cornice of the ceiling.

Nearly in the centre of this mirror, however, there was a small circular fracture, as if made by a stone or bullet, with long cracks radiating, like the beams of a star, in all directions over the shivered plate: and when I looked at it more closely, I observed that it was dashed in many places with large drops of some dark purple fluid, which had hardened with time into compact and solid gouts.

I thought little of this at the time, and only wondered why people could be so mad as to abandon so beautiful a place; and why, since they had abandoned it, they did not remove the furniture, of which even a boy's eye could detect the value.

There was a centre-table of circular form, the pedestal of which, curiously carved, had been wrought, like all the rest,

in gold and azure, while the slat, when I had wiped away with some fresh green leaves the thick layer of dust which covered it, positively astonished my eyes, by the delicacy and beauty of the designs with which it was adorned. Besides this, there were divans and arm-chairs of the same fashion and colors, with cushions which had been once of sky-blue damask, though their brilliancy, and even their hues, had long been defaced by the dust, the dampness, and the squalor of that neglected place.

I should have mentioned, that on the beautiful table I discovered gouts of the same dark substance which I had previously observed on the broken mirror; and that there were still clearly perceptible on one of the divans, dark splashes, and what must, when fluid, have been almost a pool of the same deep, rusty hue.

At the time, it is true, I paid little attention to these things, being busily employed in the boy-like idea of putting my newly discovered palace of Armida into a complete state of repair, and coming to pass all my leisure moments, even to the studying my Prometheus Bound, and composing my weekly hexameters and Alcaics, in this sweet sequestered spot.

And, in truth, within a week I had put the greater part of my plan into execution; purloined dusters from my dame's boarding-house, green boughs of the old elms for brooms, and water from the ditch, soon made things clean at least; and the air, which I suffered so long as I was there, daily to blow through it in all directions, soon rendered it, comparatively speaking, dry and comfortable; and when all its windows were thrown wide, it would be scarcely possible to find a more lightsome or delicious spot for summer musing than that old English summer-house.

Thus things went on for weeks—for months—unsuspected;

for I always latched the door, and secured the windows from within, before leaving my fairy palace for the night; and as all looked just as usual without, no one so much as dreamed of trying the lock, to ascertain if a door were still fastened, the threshold of which, as men believed, no human foot had crossed since the days of the second James.

I could often, it is true, discover the traces of recent labor in the immediate neighborhood of my discovery; I could perceive at a glance where the grass had been newly shorn, the yew hedges clipped, or the gravel-walks rolled, but never, in the course of several months, during which I spent every fine evening, either reading, or musing, or composing my boy verses, in that my enchanted castle—for I began really to consider it almost my own—did I see any human being on the premises.

The cause of this, which I did not suspect until it was revealed to me, after chance had discovered my visits to the place, was simply this, that my intrusions were confined solely to the evening; whereas, so great was the awe of the servants and the workmen for that lonely and terror-haunted spot, that nothing short of absolute compulsion, or the strongest necessity, would have induced them to go near the place after the sun had turned downwards from the zenith.

In the meantime, gratified by the complete success of my first inroad, and the possession of my first discovery, I felt no inclination to push my advances further, or to make any incursion into the body of the place.

Every evening, as soon as I could escape from the college walls, I was at my post, and lingered there as late as college hours would permit. It was a strange fancy in a boy, and stranger yet than would at first appear in this, that there was a very considerable admixture of something nearly approaching

to fear, and that of a painful kind, in the feeling which made me so assiduous in my visits to that old pavilion.

There was, it is true, nothing definite in my fancies. I knew nothing—I cannot say even that I suspected anything—concerning the mysterious closing of the place; and often, since I have been made acquainted with the tale, I have marvelled at my own obtuseness, and wondered that a secret so transparent should have escaped me.

So it was, however, that I suspected nothing, although I felt sure that mystery there was; and being of somewhat an imaginative temper, I used to amuse myself by accounting for it in my own mind, weaving all sorts of strange and wild romances, and inventing the most horrible stories that can be conceived, until, as the shadows would fall dark around me, daunted by my own conceptions, I would make all secure and fast with trembling fingers, swing myself back across over the pool by my accustomed oak-branch, and run home as hard as my legs could carry me, haunted by indistinct and almost superstitious horror.

Thus things went on, until at the end of summer I was at last detected in my stolen visits, and the whole mystery was cleared up.

I remember as clearly as if I heard it now, the exclamation of terror and dismay uttered by the old gardener, who, having left some implement behind him on the lawn during the morning labors, had been forced to bend his unwilling steps back to the haunted ground to recover it.

I could not but smile afterwards, when he recounted to me his astonishment and terror at seeing the old summer-house, which never had been opened within the memory of man, with all its windows wide to the free air and evening sunshine, when he told me how often he turned back to seek aid from

his fellows—how he almost believed that fiends or evil spirits were holding their foul sabbath there, and how he started aghast with horror, not now for himself, but for me, as he beheld the young Etonian stretched tranquilly upon the blood-stained couch—for those dark stains were of human gore—conning his task for the morrow.

I rushed out of the place at his horrid outcry ; a few words told my story, and pleaded my excuse—with the good, simple-minded rustic little excuse was needed—but it was not till after many sittings, and many a long afternoon's discourse, that I learned all the details of the sad event which had converted that fair pavilion into a place as terrible to the ideas of the country folks as a dark charnel-vault.

“Ay,” said the old man, as he gazed fearfully about him, after I had persuaded him at length to cross the dreaded threshold, “Ay ! it is all as they tell, though not a man of them has ever seen it. There is the glass which the bullet broke, after passing right through his brain ; and there is his blood all spattered on the mirror. And look, young master, those spots on the table came from *her* heart ; and that couch you was lying on, is where they laid her when they took her up. See, it's all dabbled yet ; and where your head was resting now, the dead girl's head lay more than a hundred years since ! Come away, master ! come away ! I never thought to have looked on these things, though I know all about them.”

“Oh, tell me—tell me about them !” I exclaimed ; “I am not a bit afraid. Do tell me all about them.”

“Not now—not now—nor not here,” said the old man, gazing about as if he expected to see a spirit stalk out of some shady nook of the surrounding trees. “I would not tell you here to be master of all Ditton-in-the-Dale ! But come up, if you will, to the great house to-morrow, and ask for old Mat-

threw Dawson, and I'll show you all the place—the family never lives here now, nor hasn't since that deed was done—and then I'll tell you all about it, if you must hear. But if you're wise, you'll shun it; for it will chill your young blood to listen, and cling to your young heart with a gloom for ever."

"Oh, I will come, be sure, Matthew! I would not miss it for the world. But it is getting late, so I'll fasten up the old place and be going;" and suiting the action to the word, I soon secured the fastenings, while the old gardener stood by, marvelling and muttering at the boldness of young blood, until I had finished setting things in order, when I shook hands with the old man, slipping my *one* half-crown into his horny palm, and saying,

"Well, good-night, Matthew Dawson, and don't forget to-morrow evening."

"That I wo'nt, master," he replied, greatly propitiated by my offering. "But which way are you going?"

"Oh, I'll soon show you," I replied; and swinging myself up my tree, I was beyond the precincts of the haunted ground almost in a moment.

"The very way *he* came the time he did it," cried the old gardener, with upturned hands and eyes aghast. But I tarried then to ask no further questions, being quite sufficiently terrified for one night; although my pride forbade my displaying my terrors to the old rustic.

The next day I was punctual to my appointment; and then, for the first time, I heard the melancholy tale which, at length, I purpose to relate.

It was a proud and noble Norman family which had held the demesnes of Ditton-in-the-Dale since the reign of the last Plantagenet; a brave and loyal race, which had poured its

blood, like water, on many a foreign—many a native battle-field. At Evesham, a Fitz-Henry had fought beside Prince Edward's bridle-rein, against the great De Montfort and his confederate barons; and afterwards, through all the long and cruel wars of the Roses, on every field a Fitz-Henry had won honor or lost blood, upholding the claims of the true sovereign house—the house of York—until at fatal Bosworth the house itself went down, and dragged down with it the fortunes of its bold supporters.

Thereafter, during the reign of the Tudors, the name of Fitz-Henry was heard rarely in the court or on the field; impoverished in fortune by fines and sequestrations, suspected of disloyalty to the now sovereign house, the heads of the family had wisely held themselves aloof from intrigue and conspiracy, and dwelt among their yeomen, who had in old times been their fathers' vassals, staunch lovers of field-sports, true English country gentlemen, seeking the favor and fearing the ill-will of no man—no, not of England's king.

Attached to the old religion, though neither bigots nor zealots, they had escaped the violence of bluff Harry, when he turned protestant for Bullen's eyes; and had—though something to leeward of her favor, as lukewarm romanists and no lovers of the Spaniard—passed safely through the ordeal of Mary's cruel reign.

But with the accession of the man-minded Elizabeth, the fortunes of the house revived for a while. It was the policy of that great and gracious queen to gather around her all that were brave, honest, and manly in her realm, without regard to family creeds or family traditions. Claiming descent as much from one as from the other of the rival houses of Lancaster and York, loyalty to the one was no more offence to her clear eyes than good faith to the other. While loyalty to what he honestly

believed to be the true sovereign house, was the strongest recommendation to her favor in each and every subject.

The Fitz-Henry, therefore, of her day—a young and gallant soldier, who visited the shores of the New World with Cavendish and Raleigh, fought for his native land, although a catholic, against the terrible armada of the Most Catholic King, with Drake, and Frobisher, and Howard, waged war in the Low Countries, and narrowly missed death at Zutphen by Philip Sidney's side—stood as high in the favor of his queen as in the estimation of all good and honorable men. It is true, when the base and odious James succeeded to the throne of the lion-queen, and substituted mean and loathsome king-craft for frank and open English policy, the grey-haired soldier, navigator, statesman—for he had shone in each capacity—retired, as his ancestors had done before him, during the reigns of the seventh and eighth Henries, to the peaceful shades and innocent pleasures of Ditton-in-the-Dale.

So true, however, was he to the time-honored principles of his high race, so loyally did he bring up his son, so firmly did he strengthen his youthful mind with all maxims and all laws of honor, linking the loyal subject to the rightful king, that no sooner had the troubles broken out between the misguided monarch and his rebellious Parliament—although the veteran of Elizabeth had fallen asleep long before, full of years and honors, than his young heir, Osborn Fitz-Henry, displayed the cognizance of his old house, mustered his tenantry, and set foot in stirrup, well nigh the first, to withdraw it the very last, of the adherents of the hapless Charles. So long did he resist in arms, so pertinaciously did he uphold the authority of the first Charles, so early did he rise again in behalf of the second, that he was noted by the parliament as an incorrigible and most desperate malignant; and, had it not been that, by his gallantry in the

field, and his humanity when the strife was ended, he had won the personal good-will of Cromwell, it is most likely that it would have gone hard with his fortunes if not with his life.

After the restoration, he was of course neglected by the fiddling, gambling, wenching, royal buffoon, who succeeded the royal martyr, and whose necessities he had supplied, when an outcast pauper exile in a foreign land, from the proceeds of those very estates which he had so nearly lost in fighting for his crown.

Osborn Fitz-Henry, too, was gathered to his fathers. He died little advanced beyond the prime of life, worn out with the toil he had undergone in the camp, and shattered by the wounds he had received on almost every battle-field from Edge-Hill to Dunbar and Worcester.

He had, however, married very young, before the breaking out of the rebellion, and had lived to see not his son only a noble and superior man, ready to fill his place when vacant, and in it uphold the honor of his family, but his son's children also advancing fast towards maturity.

Allan Fitz-Henry, the son of Charles's stout partisan, the grandson of Elizabeth's warrior, was the head of the house, when my tale commences.

He, too, had married young—such, indeed, was the custom of his house—and had survived his wife, by whom he had two fair daughters, but no heir; and this was a source of vexation so constantly present to his mind, that in the end it altered the whole disposition of the man, rendering him irritable, harsh, stern, unreasonable, and unhappy.

Fondly attached to the memory of his lost wife, whom he had loved devotedly while living, it never entered his mind to marry a second time, even with the hope of begetting an heir by whom to perpetuate the honors and principles of his house;

although he was continually on the fret—miserable himself, and making others miserable, in consequence of the certainty that he should be the last of his race.

His only hope was now centred in his daughters, or to speak more correctly, in his eldest daughter—for her he had determined to constitute his heiress, endowing her with all his landed property, all his heirlooms, all that could constitute her the head of his house; in return for which he had predetermined that she should become the wife of some husband of his own choosing, who should unite to a pedigree as noble as that of the Howards, all qualifications which should fit him to represent the house into which he should be adopted; and who should be willing to drop his own paternal name and bearings, how ancient and noble soever, in order to adopt the style and the arms of Fitz-Henry.

Proud by nature, by blood, and by education—though with a clear and honorable pride—he had been rendered a thousand times prouder and more haughty by the very circumstances which seemed to threaten a downfall to the fortunes of his house—his house, which had survived such desperate reverses; which had come out of every trial, like pure gold, the better and the brighter from the furnace—his house, which neither the ruin of friendly monarchs, nor the persecutions of hostile monarchs, nor the neglect of ungrateful monarchs, had been able to shake, any more than the autumnal blasts, or the frosts of winter, had availed to uproot the oak trees of his park, coeval with his name.

In the midst of health and wealth, honor and good esteem, with an affectionate family, and a devoted household around him, Allan Fitz-Henry fancied himself a most unhappy man—perhaps the most unhappy of mankind.

Alas! was it to punish such vain, such sinful, such senseless, and inordinate repinings?

Who shall presume to scrutinize the judgments, or pry into the secrets of the Inscrutable?

This much alone is certain, that ere he was gathered to his fathers, Allan Fitz-Henry might, and that not unjustly, have termed himself that, which now, in the very wantonness of pampered and insatiate success he swore that he was daily—the most unhappy of the sons of men.

For to calamities so dreadful as might have disturbed the reason of the strongest minded, remorse was added, so just, so terrible, so overwhelming, that men actually marvelled how he lived on, and was not insane.

But I must not anticipate.

It was a short time after the failure of the Duke of Monmouth's weak and ungrateful attempt at revolution, a short time after the conclusion of the merciless and bloody butcheries of that disgrace to the English ermine, the ferocious Jefferies, that the incidents occurred, which I learned first on the evening subsequent to my discovery in the fatal summer-house.

At this time Allan Fitz-Henry—it was a singular proof, by the way, of the hereditary pride of this old Norman race, that having numbered among them so many friends and counsellors of monarchs, no one of their number had been found willing to accept titular honors, holding it a higher thing to be the premier gentleman than the junior peer of England—at this time, I say, Allan Fitz-Henry was a man of some forty-five or fifty years, well built and handsome, of courtly air and dignified presence; nor must it be imagined that in his fancied grievances he forgot to support the character of his family, or that he carried his griefs abroad with him into the world.

At times, indeed, he might be a little grave and thoughtful, especially at such times as he heard mention made of the promise or success of this or that scion of some noble house; but

it was only within his own family circle, and to his most familiar friends; that he was wont to open his heart, and complain of his ill-fortune, at being the first childless father of his race—for so, in his contempt for the poor girls, whom he still, strange contradiction! loved fondly and affectionately, he was accustomed in his dark hours to style himself; as if forsooth an heir male were the only offspring worthy to be called the child of such a house.

Though he was fond, and gentle, and at times even tender to his motherless daughters—for, to do him justice, he never suffered a symptom of his disappointment and disgust to break out to their annoyance, yet was there no gleam of paternal satisfaction in his sad eye, no touch of paternal pride in his vexed heart, as he looked upon their graceful forms, and noted their growing beauties.

And yet they were a pair of whom the haughtiest potentate on earth might have been proud, and with justice.

Blanche and Agnes Fitz-Henry were at this time in their eighteenth and seventeenth years—but one summer having passed between their births, and their mother having died within a few hours after the latter saw the light.

They were, indeed, as lovely girls as the sun of merry England shone upon; and in those days it was still *merry* England, and famous then as now for the rare beauty of its women, whether in the first dawn of girlhood, or in the full-blown flush of feminine maturity.

Both tall, above the middle height of women, both exquisitely formed, with figures delicate and slender, yet full withal, and voluptuously rounded, with the long taper hands, the small and shapely feet and ankles, the swan-like necks, and classic heads gracefully set on, which are held to denote, in all countries, the predominance of gentle blood; when seen at a distance, and

judged by the person only, it would have been almost impossible to distinguish the elder from the younger sister.

But look upon them face to face, and never, in all respects, were two girls of kindred race so entirely dissimilar. The elder, Blanche, was, as her name denotes, though ladies' names are oftentimes misnomers, a genuine English blond. Her abundant and beautiful hair, trained to float down upon her snowy shoulders in silky masses of unstudied curls, was of the lightest golden brown. There was not a shade of red in its hues, although her complexion was of that peculiarly dazzling character which is common to red-haired persons; yet when the sun shone on its glistening waves, so brilliantly did the golden light flash from it, that you might almost have imagined there was a circlet of living glory above her clear white brow.

Her eyebrows and eyelashes were many shades darker than her hair, relieving her face altogether from that charge of insipidity which is so often, and for the most part so truly, brought against fair-haired and fair-featured beauties. The eyes themselves, which those long lashes shrouded, were of the deepest violet blue; so deep, that at first sight you would have deemed them black, but for the soft and humid languor which is never seen in eyes of that color. The rest of her features were as near as possible to the Grecian model, except that there was a slight depression where the nose joins the brow, breaking that perfectly straight line of the classical face, which, however beautiful to the statue, is less attractive in life than the irregular outline of the northern countenance.

Her mouth, with the exception of—perhaps I should rather say in conjunction with—her eyes, was the most lovely and expressive feature in her face. There were twin dimples at its corners; yet was not its expression one of habitual mirth, but of tenderness and softness rather, unmixed, although an

anchorite might have been pardoned the wish to press his lips to its voluptuous curve with the slightest expression of sensuality.

Her complexion was, as I have said, dazzlingly brilliant; but it was the brilliance of the lily rather than of the rose, though at the least emotion, whether of pain or pleasure, the eloquent blood would rush, like the morning's glow over some snow-crowned Alp, across cheek, brow, and neck, and bosom, and vanish thence so rapidly, that ere you should have time to say, nay, even to think,

“Look! look how beautiful, 'twas fled.”

Such was the elder beauty, the destined heiress of the ancient house, the promised mother of a line of sons, who should perpetuate the name and hand down the principles of the Fitz-Henries to far distant ages. Such were the musings of her father,

Proh! cœca mens mortalium!

and at such times alone, if ever, a sort of doubtful pride would come to swell his hope, whispering that for such a creature, no man, however high or haughty, but would be willing to renounce the pride of birth, even untempted by the demesnes of Ditton-in-the-Dale, and many another lordly manor coupled to the time-honored name of Fitz-Henry.

Her sister Agnes, though not less beautiful than Blanche—and there were those who insisted that she was more so—was as different from her, in all but the general resemblance of figure and carriage, as night is from morning, or autumn from early summer-time.

Her ringlets, not less profuse than Blanche's, and clustering in closer and more mazy curls, were as black as the raven's wing, and, like the feathers of the wild bird, were lighted up

when the sun played on them with a sort of purplish and metallic gloss, that defies alike the pen of the writer and the painter's pencil to depict to the eye.

Her complexion, though soft and delicate, was of the very darkest hue that is ever seen in persons of unmixed European blood; so dark that the very blood which would mantle to her cheek at times in burning blushes, was shaded, as it were, with a darker hue, like damask roses seen through the medium of a gold-tinted window-pane.

Her brows and lashes were as black as night, but, strange to say, the eyes that flashed from beneath them with an almost painful splendor, were of a clear, deep azure, less dark than those of the fairer sister, giving a singular and wild character to her whole face, and affecting the style of her beauty, but whether for the better or the worse it was for those who admired or shunned—and there were who took both parts—to determine. Her face was rounder and fuller than her sister's, and in fact this was true of her whole person—so much so, that she was often mistaken for the elder—her features were less regular, her nose having a slight tendency to that form which has no name in our language, but which charmed all beholders in Roxana, as *retroussé*. Her mouth was as warm, as soft, as sweetly dimpled, but it was not free from that expression which Blanche's lacked altogether, and might have been blamed as too wooing and luxurious.

Such were the various characters of the sisters' personal appearance—the characters of their mental attributes were as distinctly marked and as widely different.

Blanche was all gentleness and moderation from her very cradle—a delicate and tender child, smiling always but rarely laughing; never boisterous or loud even in her childish plays. And as she grew older this character became more definite,

and was more strongly observed ; she was a pensive, tranquil creature, not melancholy, much less sad—for she was awake to all that was beautiful or grand, all that was sweet or gentle in the face of nature, or in the history of man ; and there was, perhaps, more real happiness concealed under her calm exterior, than is often to be found under the wilder mirth of merrier beings. Ever ready to yield her wishes to those of her friends or companions, many persons imagined that she had little will, and no fixed wishes or deliberate aspirations ; passionless and pure as the lily of the vale, many supposed that she was cold and heartless. Oh ! ignorant ! not to remember that the hearts of the fiercest volcanoes boil still beneath a head of snow ; and that it is even in the calmest and most moderate characters that passion once enkindled burns fierce, perennial, and unquenchable ! Thus far, however, had she advanced into the flower of fair maidenhood, undisturbed by any warmer dream than devoted affection towards her parent, whose wayward grief she could understand if she could not appreciate, and whom she strove by every gentle wile to wean from his morbid fancies ; and earnest love towards her sister, whom she, indeed, almost adored—perhaps adored the more from the very difference of their minds, and for her very imperfections.

For Agnes was all gay vivacity, and petulance, and fire ; so that her young companions, who sportively named Blanche the icicle, had christened her the sunbeam ; and, in truth, if the first name were ill chosen, the second seemed to be an inspiration ; for like a sunbeam that touched nothing but to illuminate it, like a sunbeam she played with all things, smiled on all things in their turn—like a sunbeam she brought mirth with her presence, and after her departure left a double gloom behind her.

More dazzling than Blanche, she made her impression at first sight, and so long as the skies were clear and the atmosphere unruffled, the sunbeam would continue to gild, to charm, to be worshipped. But if the time of darkness and affliction came, the gay sunbeam held aloof, while the poor icicle, melted from its seeming coldness, was ever ready to weep for the sorrows of those who had neglected her in the days of their happiness.

Unused to yield, high-spirited when crossed, yet carrying off even her stubbornness and quick temper by the brilliancy, the wit, the lively and bold audacity which she cast around them, Agnes ruled in her circle an imperious and despotic queen; while her slaves, even as they trembled before her half sportive but emphatic frown, did not suspect the sceptre of the tyrant beneath the spell of the enchantress.

Agnes, in one word, was the idol of the rich and gay; Blanche was the saint of the poor, the lowly, the sick, and those who mourn.

It may be that the peculiarity of her position, the neglect which she had always experienced from her father, and mediately from the hirelings of the household, ever prompt to pander to the worst feelings of their superiors—the consciousness that born co-heiress with her sister, she was doomed to sink into the insignificance of an undowered and uncared-for girl, had tended in some degree to form the character which Agnes had ever borne, and which alone she had displayed, until the period when my tale commences.

It may be that the consciousness of wrong endured, had hardened a heart naturally soft and tender, and rendered it unyielding and rebellious; it may be that injustice, endured at the hands of hirelings in early years, had engendered a spirit of resistance, and armed her mind and quickened her

tongue against the world, which, as she fancied, wronged her. It may be, more than all, that a secret, perhaps an unconscious jealousy of her sister's superior advantages, not in the wretched sense of worldly wealth and position, but of the love and reverence of friends and kindred, had embittered her young soul, and caused her to cast over it a veil of light and wild demeanor, of free speech and daring mirth, which had by degrees grown into habits, and become part and parcel of her nature.

If it were so, however, there were no outward indications that such was the case; for never were there seen two sisters more united and affectionate—nor would it have been easy to say on which side the balance of kindness preponderated. For if Blanche was ever the first to cede to her sister's wishes, and the last in any momentary disappointment or annoyance to speak one quick or unkind word, so was Agnes, with her expressive features and flashing eye, and ready, tameless wit, prompt as light to avenge the slightest reflection cast on Blanche's tranquillity and coldness; and if at times a quick word or sharp retort broke from her lips, and called a tear to the eye of her calmer sister, not a moment would elapse before she would cast herself upon her neck and weep her sincere contrition, and be for hours an altered being; until her natural spirit would prevail, and she would be again the wild mirthful madcap, whose very faults could call forth no keener reproach than a grave and thoughtful smile from the lips of those who loved her the most dearly.

Sad were the daughters of Allan Fitz-Henry—daughters whom not a peer in England but would have regarded as the brightest gems of his coronet, as the pride and ornament of his house; but whom, by a strange anomaly, their own father, full as he was of warm affections and kindly inclinations, never

looked upon but with a secret feeling of discontent and disappointment, that they were not other than they were; and with a half-confessed conviction that fair as they were, tender and loving, graceful, accomplished, delicate, and noble-minded, he could have borne to lay them both in the cold grave, so that a son could be given to the house in exchange for their lost loveliness.

In outward demeanor, however, he was to his children all that a father should be; a little querulous at times, perhaps, and irritable, but fond, though not doting, and considerate; and I have wandered greatly from my intention, if anything that I have said has been construed to signify that there existed the slightest estrangement between the father and his children; for had Allan Fitz-Henry but suspected the possibility of such a thing, he had torn the false pride like a venomous weed from his heart, and had been a wiser and a happier man. In his case it was the blindness of the heart that caused its partial hardness; but events were at hand that should flood it with the clearest light, and melt it to more than woman's tenderness.

CHAPTER II.

A lovely summer's evening, in the year 168—, was drawing towards its close, when many a gay and brilliant cavalcade of both sexes, many of the huge gilded coaches of that day, and many a train of liveried attendants, winding through the green lane as they arrived, some in this direction from Eton, some in that, across Datchet-mead from Windsor and its royal castle, came thronging towards Ditton-in-the-Dale.

Lights were beginning to twinkle as the shadows fell thick among the arcades of the trim gardens, and the wilder forest-walks which extended their circuitous course for many a mile along the stately hall of the Fitz-Henries; loud bursts of festive or of martial music came pealing down the wind, mixed with the hum of a gay and happy concourse, causing the nightingales to hold their peace, not in despair of rivalling the melody, but that the mirth jarred unpleasantly on the souls of the melancholy birds.

The gates of Ditton-in-the-Dale were flung wide open, for it was gala night, and never had the old hall put on a gayer or more sumptuous show than it had donned that evening.

From far and near the gentry and the nobles of Buckingham and Berkshire had gathered to the birth-day ball—for such was the occasion of the festive meeting.

Yes! it was Blanche Fitz-Henry's birth-day; and on this gay and glad anniversary was the fair heiress of that noble house to be introduced to the great world as the future owner of those beautiful demesnes.

From the roof to the foundation the old manor-house—it was a stately red brick mansion of the latter period of Elizabethan architecture, with mullioned windows and stacks of curiously wreathed chimneys—was one blaze of light; and as group after group of gay and high-born riders came caracoling up to the hospitable porch, and coach after coach, with its running footmen or mounted outriders, lumbered slowly in their train, the aloons and corridors began to fill up rapidly with a joyous and splendid company.

The entrance-hall, a vast square apartment, wainscoted with old English oak, brighter and richer in its dark hues than mahogany, received the entering guests; and what with the profusion of wax-lights, pendent in gorgeous chandeliers from

the carved roof, or fixed in silver sconces to the walls, the gay festoons of green wreaths and fresh summer flowers mixed quaintly with old armor, blazoned shields, and rustling banners, some of which had waved over the thirsty plains of Syria, and been fanned by the shouts of triumph that pealed so high at Cressy and Poitiers, it presented a not unapt picture of that midway period—that halting-place, as it were, between the old world and the new—when chivalry and feudalism had ceased already to exist among the nations, but before the rudeness of reform had banished the last remnants of courtesy, and the reverence for all things that were high and noble—for all things that were fair and graceful—for all things, in one word, except the golden calf, the mob-worshipped mammon.

Within this stately hall was drawn up in glittering array the splendid band of the Life Guards, for royalty himself was present, and all the officers of that superb regiment quartered at Windsor had followed in his train; and as an ordinary courtesy to their well-proved and loyal host, the services of those chosen musicians had been tendered and accepted.

Through many a dazzling corridor, glittering with lights, and redolent of choicest perfumes, through many a fair saloon the guests were marshalled to the great drawing-room, where, beneath a canopy of state, the ill-advised and imbecile monarch, soon to be deserted by the very princes and princesses who now clustered round his throne, sat, with his host and his lovely daughters at his right hand, accepting the homage of the fickle crowd, who were within a little year to bow obsequiously to the cold-blooded Hollander.

That was a day of singular, and what would now be termed hideous costumes—a day of hair-powder and patches, of hoops and trains, of stiff brocades and tight-laced stomachers, and high-heeled shoes among the ladies—of flowing periwigs and

coats with huge cuffs and no collars, and voluminous skirts, of diamond-hilted rapiers and diamond buckles, ruffles of Valenciennes and Mechlin lace, among the ruder sex. And though the individual might be metamorphosed strangely from the fair form which nature gave him; it cannot be denied that the concourse of highly-bred and graceful persons, when viewed as a whole, was infinitely more picturesque, infinitely more like what the fancy paints a meeting of the great and noble, than any assemblage nowadays, however courtly or refined, in which the stiff dress coats and white neckcloths of the men are not to be redeemed by the Parisian finery—how much more natural, let critics tell, than the hoop and train—of the fair portion of the company.

The rich materials, the gay colors, the glittering jewelry, and waving plumes, all contributed their part to the splendor of the show; and in those days a gentleman possessed at least this advantage, lost to him in these practical utilitarian times, that he could not by any possibility be mistaken for his own *valet de chambre*—a misfortune which has befallen many a one, the most aristocratic not excepted, of modern nobility.

A truly graceful person will be graceful, and look well in every garb, however strange or *outrè*; and there is, moreover, undoubtedly something, apart from any paltry love of finery or mere vanity of person, which elevates the thoughts, and stamps a statelier demeanor on the man who is clad highly for some high occasion. The custom, too, of wearing arms, peculiar to the gentlemen of that day, had its effect, and that not a slight one, as well on the character as on the bearing of the individual so distinguished.

As for the ladies, loveliness will still be loveliness, disguise it as you may; and if the beauties of King James's court lost much by the travesty of their natural ringlets, they gained,

perhaps, yet more from the increased lustre of their complexions and brilliancy of their eyes.

So that it is far from being the case, as is commonly supposed, that it was owing to fashion alone, and the influence of all powerful custom, that the costume of that day was not tolerated only, but admired by its wearers.

At this time, however, the use of hair-powder, though general, was by no means universal; and many beauties who fancied that it did not suit their complexions, dispensed with it altogether, or wore it in some modified shape, and tinged with some coloring matter, which assimilated it more closely to the natural tints of the hair.

At all events, it must have been a dull eye, and a cold heart, that could have looked undelighted on the assemblage that night gathered in the ball-room of Ditton-in-the-Dale.

But now the reception was finished; the royal party moved into the ball-room, from which they shortly afterwards retired, leaving the company at liberty from the restraint which their presence had imposed upon them. The concourse broke up into little groups; the stately minuet was performed, and livelier dances followed it; and gentlemen sighed tender sighs, and looked unutterable things; and ladies listened to soft nonsense, and smiled gentle approbation; and melting glances were exchanged, and warm hands were pressed warmly; and fans were flirted angrily, and flippant jokes were interchanged—for human nature, whether in the seventeenth or the nineteenth century, whether arrayed in brocade or simply dressed in broadcloth, is human nature still; and, perhaps, not one feeling or one passion that actuated man's or woman's heart five hundred years ago, but dwells within it now, and shall dwell unchanged for ever.

It needs not to say that, on such an occasion, in their own

fair beauty's cold, my lord. Give me that Italian complexion, and that coal-black hair! Gad zooks! I honor the girl's spirit for not disguising it with starch and pomatum. There's more passion in her little finger, than in the whole soul of the other."

"You're out there, George Delawarr," returned the peer. "Trust me, it is not always the quickest flame that burns the strongest; nor the liveliest girl that feels the most deeply. There's an old saying, and a true one, that still water aye runs deep. And, trust me, if I know anything of the dear, delicious, devilish sex, as methinks I am not altogether a novice at the trade, if ever Blanche Fitz-Henry love at all, she will love with her whole soul, and heart, and spirit. That gay, laughing brunette will love you with her tongue, her eyes, her head, and perhaps her fancy—the other, if, as I say, she ever love at all, will love with her whole being."

"The broad acres! my lord! all the broad acres!" replied the cornet, laughing more merrily than before. "Fore God! I think it the very thing for you. For the first Lord St. George was, I believe, in the ark with Noah, so that you will pass current with the first gentleman of England. I prithee, my lord, push your suit, and help me on a little with my dark Dulcinea."

"Faith! George, I've no objection; and see, this dance is over. Let us go up and ask their fair hands. You'll have no trouble in ousting that shallow-pated puppy Jack, and I think I can put the pass on Mr. privy-counsellor there, although he is simpering so prettily. But, hold a moment, have you been duly and in form presented to your black-eyed beauty!"

"Upon my soul! I hope so, my lord. It were very wrong else; for I have danced with her three times to-night already."

"The devil! Well, come along, quick. I see that they are going to announce supper, so soon as this next dance shall be

ended ; and if we can engage them now, we shall have their fair company for an hour at least."

"I am with you, my lord!"

And away they sauntered through the crowd, and ere long were coupled for a little space each to the lady of his choice.

The dance was soon over, and then, as Lord St. George had surmised, supper was announced, and the cavaliers led their ladies to the sumptuous board, and there attended them with all that courtly and respectful service, which, like many another good thing, has passed away and been forgotten with the diamond-hilted sword and the full bottomed periwig.

George Delawarr was full as ever of gay quips and merry repartees ; his wit was as sparkling as the champagne which in some degree inspired it, and as innocent. There was no touch of bitterness or satire in his polished and gentle humor ; no envy or dislike pointed his quick, epigrammatic speech ; but all was clear, light, and transparent, as the sunny air at noonday. Nor was his conversation altogether light and mirthful. There were at times bursts of high enthusiasm, at which he would himself laugh heartily a moment afterwards—there were touches of passing romance and poetry blending in an under-current with his fluent mirth ; and, above all, there was an evident strain of right feeling, of appreciation of all that was great, and generous, and good, predominant above romance and wit, perceptible in every word he uttered.

And Agnes listened, and laughed, and flung back skilfully and cleverly the ball of conversation, as he tossed it to her. She was pleased, it was evident, and amused. But she was pleased only as with a clever actor, a brilliant performer on some new instrument now heard for the first time. The gay, wild humor of the young man hit her fancy ; his mad wit struck a kindred chord in her mind ; but the latent poetry and romance

passed unheeded, and the noblest point of all, the good and gracious feelings, made no impression on the polished but hard surface of the bright maiden's heart.

Meantime, how fared the peer with the calmer and gentler sister? Less brilliant than George Delawarr, he had travelled much, had seen more of men and things, had a more cultivated mind, was more of a scholar, and no less of a gentleman, scarce less perhaps of a soldier; for he had served a campaign or two in his early youth in the Low Countries.

He was a noble and honorable man, clever, and eloquent, and well esteemed—a little, perhaps, spoiled by that good esteem, a little too confident of himself, too conscious of his own good mien and good parts, and a little hardened, if very much polished, by continual contact with the world.

He was, however, an easy and agreeable talker, accustomed to the society of ladies, in which he was held to shine, and fond of shining. He exerted himself also that night, partly because he was really struck with Blanche's grace and beauty, partly because Delawarr's liveliness and wit excited him to a sort of playful rivalry.

Still, he was not successful; for though Blanche listened graciously, and smiled in the right places, and spoke in answer pleasantly and well, when she did speak, and evidently wished to appear and to be amused; her mind was at times absent and distracted, and it could not long escape the observation of so thorough a man of the world as Lord St. George, that he had not made that impression on the young country damsel which he was wont to make, with one half the effort, on what might be supposed more difficult ladies.

But though he saw this plainly, he was too much of a gentleman to be either piqued or annoyed; and if anything he exerted himself the more to please, when he believed exertion

useless ; and by degrees his gentle partner laid aside her abstraction, and entered into the spirit of the hour with something of her sister's mirth, though with a quieter and more chastened tone.

It was a pleasant party, and a merry evening ; but like all other things, merry or sad, it had its end, and passed away, and by many was forgotten ; but there were two persons present there who never while they lived forgot that evening—for there were other two, to whom it was indeed the commencement of the end.

But the hour for parting had arrived, and with the ceremonious greetings of those days, deep bows and stately courtesies, and kissing of fair hands, and humble requests to be permitted to pay their duty on the following day, the cavaliers and ladies parted.

When the two gallants stood together in the great hall, George Delawarr turned suddenly to the peer—

“Where the deuce are you going to sleep to-night, St. George? You came down hither all the way from London, did you not? You surely do not mean to return to-night.”

“I surely do not *wish* it, you mean, George. No, truly. But I do mean it. For my fellows tell me that there is not a bed to be had for love, which does not at all surprise me, or for money, which I confess does somewhat, in Eton, Slough, or Windsor. And if I must go back to Brentford or to Hounslow, as well at once to London.”

“Come with me! Come with me, St. George. I can give you quarters in the barracks, and a good breakfast, and a game of tennis if you will ; and afterward, if you like, we'll ride over and see how these bright-eyed beauties look by daylight, after all this night-work.”

“A good offer, George, and I'll take it as it is offered.”

"How are you here? In a great lumbering coach I suppose. Well, look you, I have got two horses here; you shall take mine, and I'll ride on my fellow's, who shall go with your people and pilot them on the road, else they'll be getting that great gilded Noah's ark into Datchet-ditch. Have you got any tools? Ay! ay! I see you travel well equipped, if you do ride in your coach. Now your riding-cloak, the nights are damp here, by the river-side, even in summer; oh! never mind your pistols, you'll find a brace in my holsters, genuine Kuchenreuters. I can hit a crown piece with them, for a hundred guineas, at fifty paces."

"Heaven send that you never shoot at me with them, if that's the case, George."

"Heaven send that I never shoot at any one, my lord, unless it be an enemy of my king and country, and in open warfare; for so certainly as I do shoot I shall kill."

"I do not doubt you, George. But let's be off. The lights are burning low in the sockets, and these good fellows are evidently tired out with their share of our festivity. Fore God! I believe we are the last of the guests."

And with the word, the young men mounted joyously, and galloped away at the top of their horses' speed to the quarters of the life-guards in Windsor.

Half an hour after their departure, the two sisters sat above stairs in a pleasant chamber, disrobing themselves, with the assistance of their maidens, of the cumbrous and stiff costumes of the ball-room, and jesting merrily over the events of the evening.

"Well, Blanche," said Agnes, archly, "confess, siss, who is the lord paramount, the beau *par excellence*, of the ball? I know, you demure puss! After all, it is ever the quiet cat that licks the cream. But to think that on your very first night

you should have made such a conquest. So difficult, too, to please, they say, and all the great court ladies dying for him."

"Hush! madcap. I don't know who you mean. At all events, I have not danced four dances in one evening with one cavalier. Ah! have I caught you, pretty mistress?"

"Oh! that was only *poor* George Delawarr. A paltry cornet in the guards. He will do well enough to have dangling after one, to play with, while he amuses one—but fancy, being proud of conquering poor George! His namesake with the Saint before it were worth a score of such."

"Fie, sister!" said Blanche, gravely. "I do not love to hear you talk so. I am sure he's a very pretty gentleman, and has twice as much head as my lord, if I'm not mistaken; and three times as much heart."

"Heart, indeed, siss! Much you know about hearts, I fancy. But, now that you speak of it, I *will* try if he has got a heart. If he has, he will do well to pique some more eligible—"

"Oh! Agnes, Agnes! I cannot hear you—"

"Pshaw!" interrupted the younger sister, very bitterly, "this affectation of sentiment and disinterestedness sits very prettily on the heiress of Ditton-in-the-Dale, Long Netherby, and Waltham Ferrers, three manors, and ten thousand pounds a year to buy a bridegroom! Poor I, with my face for my fortune, must needs make my wit eke out my want of dowry. And I'm not one, I promise you, siss, to choose love in a cottage. No, no! Give me your Lord St. George, and I'll make over all my right and title to poor George Delawarr this minute. Heigho! I believe the fellow is smitten with me after all. Well, well! I'll have some fun with him before I have done yet."

"Again," said Blanche, gravely, but reproachfully, "I have long seen that you are light, and careless whom you wound

with your wild words, but I never thought before that you were bad-hearted."

"Bad-hearted, sister!"

"Yes! bad-hearted! To speak to me of manors, or of money, as if for fifty wills, or five hundred fathers, I would ever profit by a parent's whim to rob my sister of her portion. As if I would not rather lie in the cold grave, than that my sister should have a wish ungratified, which I had power to gratify, much less that she should narrow down the standard of her choice—the holiest and most sacred thing on earth—to the miserable scale of wealth and title. Out upon it! Never, while you live, speak so to me again!"

"Sister, I never will. I did not mean it, sister, dear," cried Agnes, now much affected, as she saw how vehemently Blanche was moved. "You should not heed me. You know my wild, rash way, and how I speak whatever words come first."

"Those were very meaning words, Agnes—and very bitter, too. They cut me to the heart," cried the fair girl, bursting into a flood of passionate tears.

"Oh! do not—do not, Blanche. Forgive me, dearest! Indeed, indeed, I meant nothing!"

"Forgive you, Agnes! I have nothing to forgive. I was not even angry, but pained, but sorry for you, sister; for sure I am, that if you give way to this bitter, jealous spirit, you will work much anguish to yourself, and to all those who love you."

"Jealous, Blanche!"

"Yes, Agnes, jealous! But let us say no more. Let this pass, and be forgotten; but never, dear girl, if you love me, as I think you do, never so speak to me again."

"I never, never will." And she fell upon her neck, and kissed her fondly, as her heart relented, and she felt something of sincere repentance for the harsh words which she

had spoken, and the hard, bitter feelings which suggested them.

Another hour, and, clasped in each other's arms, they were sleeping as sweetly as though no breath of this world's bitterness had ever blown upon their hearts, or stirred them into momentary strife.

Peace to their slumbers, and sweet dreams !

It was, perhaps, an hour or two after noon, and the early dinner of the time was already over, when the two sisters strolled out into the gardens, unaccompanied, except by a tall old greyhound, Blanche's peculiar friend and guardian, and some two or three beautiful silky-haired King Charles spaniels.

After loitering for a little while among the trim parterres and box-edged terraces, and gathering a few sweet summer flowers, they turned to avoid the heat, which was excessive, into the dark elm avenue, and wandered along between the tall black yew hedges, linked arm-in-arm, indeed, but both silent and abstracted, and neither of them conscious of the rich melancholy music of the nightingale, which was ringing all around them in that pleasant solitude.

Both, indeed, were buried in deep thought; and each, perhaps, for the first time in her life, felt that her thought was such that she could not, dared not, communicate it to her sister.

For Blanche Fitz-Henry had, on the previous night, begun, for the first time in her life, to suspect that she was the owner, for the time being, of a commodity called a heart, although it may be that the very suspicion proved in some degree that the possession was about to pass, if it were not already passing, from her.

In sober seriousness, it must be confessed that the young cornet of the Life Guards, although he had made so little im-

pression on her to whom he had devoted his attentions, had produced an effect different from anything which she had ever felt before on the mind of the elder sister. It was not his good mien, nor his noble air that had struck her; for though he was a well-made, fine-looking man, of graceful manners and high-born carriage, there were twenty men in the room with whom he could not for five minutes have sustained a comparison in point of personal appearance.

His friend, the Viscount St. George, to whom she had lent but a cold ear, was a far handsomer man. Nor was it his wit and gay humor, and easy flow of conversation, that had captivated her fancy; although she certainly did think him the most agreeable man she had ever listened to. No, it was the under-current of delicate and poetical thought, the glimpses of a high and noble spirit, which flashed out at times through the light veil of reckless merriment, which, partly in compliance with the spirit of the day, and partly because his was a gay and mirthful nature, he had superinduced over the deeper and grander points of his character. No; it was a certain originality of mind, which assured her that, though he might talk lightly, he was one to feel fervently and deeply—it was the impress of truth, and candor, and high independence, which was stamped on his every word and action, that first riveted her attention, and, in spite of her resistance, half fascinated her imagination.

This it was that had held her abstracted and apparently indifferent, while Lord St. George was exerting all his powers of entertainment in her behalf; this it was that had roused her indignation at hearing her sister speak so slightingly, and, as it seemed to her, so ungenerously of one whom she felt intuitively to be good and noble.

This it was which now held her mute and thoughtful, and

almost sad ; for she felt conscious that she was on the verge of loving—loving one who, for aught that he had shown as yet, cared not for her, perhaps even preferred another—and that other her own sister.

Thereupon her maiden modesty rallied tumultuous to the rescue, and suggested the shame of giving love unasked, giving it, perchance, to be scorned—and almost she resolved to stifle the infant feeling in its birth, and rise superior to the weakness. But when was ever love vanquished by cold argument, or bound at the chariot-wheels of reason ?

The thought would still rise up prominent, turn her mind to whatever subject she would, coupled with something of pity at the treatment which he was like to meet from Agnes, something of vague, unconfessed pleasure that it was so, and something of secret hope that his eyes would ere long be opened, and that she might prove, in the end, herself his consoler.

And what, meanwhile, were the dreams of Agnes ? Bitter—bitter, and black, and hateful. Oh ! it is a terrible consideration, how swiftly evil thoughts, once admitted to the heart, take root and flourish, and grow up into a rank and poisonous crop, choking the good grain utterly, and corrupting the very soil of which they have taken hold. There is but one hope—but one ! To tear them from the root forcibly, though the heart-strings crack, and the soul trembles, as with a spiritual earthquake. To nerve the mind firmly and resolutely, yet humbly withal, and contritely, and with prayer against temptation, prayer for support from on high—to resist the Evil One with the whole force of the intellect, the whole truth of the heart, and to stop the ears steadfastly against the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.

But so did not Agnes Fitz-Henry. It is true that on the preceding night her better feelings had been touched, her

heart had relented, and she had banished, as she thought, the evil counsellors, ambition, envy, jealousy, and distrust, from her spirit.

But with the night the better influence passed away, and ere the morning had well come, the evil spirit had returned to his dwelling-place, and brought with him other spirits, worse and more wicked than himself.

The festive scene of the previous evening had, for the first time, opened her eyes fairly to her own position; she read it in the demeanor of all present; she heard it in the whispers which unintentionally reached her ears; she felt it intuitively in the shade—it was scarcely a shade, yet she observed it—of difference perceptible in the degree of deference and courtesy paid to herself and to her sister.

She felt, for the first time, that Blanche was everything, herself a mere cipher—that Blanche was the lady of the manor, the cynosure of all eyes, the queen of all hearts; herself but the lady's poor relation, the dependent on her bounty, and at the best a creature to be played with, and petted for her beauty and her wit, without regard to her feelings, or sympathy for her heart.

And prepared as she was at all times to resist even just authority with insolent rebellion; ready as she was always to assume the defensive, and from that the offensive against all whom she fancied offenders, how angrily did her heart now boil up, how almost fiercely did she muster her faculties to resist, to attack, to conquer, to annihilate all whom she deemed her enemies—and that, for the moment, was the world.

Conscious of her own beauty, of her own wit, of her own high and powerful intellect, perhaps over-confident in her resources, she determined on that instant that she would devote them all, all to one purpose, to which she would bend every

energy, direct every thought of her mind—to her own aggrandizement, 'by means of some great and splendid marriage, which should set her as far above the heiress of Ditton-in-the-Dale, as the rich heiress now stood in the world's eye above the portionless and dependent sister.

Nor was this all—there was a sterner, harder, and more wicked feeling yet, springing up in her heart, and whispering the sweetness of revenge—revenge on that amiable and gentle sister, who, so far from wronging her, had loved her ever with the tenderest and most affectionate love, who would have sacrificed her dearest wishes to her welfare—but whom, in the hardness of her embittered spirit, she could now see only as an intruder upon her own just rights, a rival on the stage of fashion, perhaps in the interests of the heart—whom she already envied, suspected, almost hated.

And Blanche, at that self-same moment, had resolved to keep watch on her own heart narrowly, and to observe her sister's bearing towards George Delawarr, that in case she should perceive her favoring his suit, she might at once crush down the germ of rising passion, and sacrifice her own to her dear sister's happiness.

Alas! Blanche! Alas! Agnes!

Thus they strolled onward, silently and slowly, until they reached the little green before the summer-house, which was then the gayest and most lightsome place that can be imagined, with its rare paintings glowing in their undimmed hues, its gilding bright and burnished, its furniture all sumptuous and new, and instead of the dark funereal ivy, covered with woodbine and rich clustered roses. The windows were all thrown wide open to the perfumed summer air, and the warm light poured in through the gaps in the tree-tops, and above the summits of the then carefully trimmed hedgerows, blithe and golden.

They entered and sat down, still pensive and abstracted ; but ere long the pleasant and happy influences of the time and place appeared to operate in some degree on the feelings of both, but especially on the tranquil and well-ordered mind of the elder sister. She raised her head suddenly, and was about to speak, when the rapid sound of horses' feet, unheard on the soft sand until they were hard by, turned her attention to the window, and the next moment the two young cavaliers, who were even then uppermost in her mind, came into view, cantering along slowly on their well-managed chargers.

Her eye was not quicker than those of the gallant riders, who, seeing the ladies, whom they had ridden over to visit, sitting by the windows of the summer-house, checked their horses on the instant, and doffed their plumed hats.

"Good faith, fair ladies, we are in fortune's graces to-day," said the young peer, gracefully, "since having ridden thus far on our way to pay you our humble devoirs, we meet you thus short of our journey's end."

"But how are we to win our way to you," cried Delawarr, "as you sit there bright *chatelaines* of your enchanted bower—for I see neither fairy skiff, piloted by grim-visaged dwarfs, to waft us over, nor even a stray dragon, by aid of whose broad wings to fly across this mimic moat, which seems to be something of the deepest?"

"Oh! gallop on, gay knights," said Agnes, smiling on Lord St. George, but averting her face somewhat from the cornet, "gallop on to the lodges, and leaving there your coursers, take the first path on the left hand, and that will lead you to our presence; and should you peradventure get entangled in the hornbeam maze, why, one of us two will bring you the clue, like a second Ariadne. Ride on and we will meet you. Come, sister, let us walk."

Blanche had as yet scarcely found words to reply to the greeting of the gallants, for the coincidence of their arrival with her own thoughts had embarrassed her a little, and she had blushed crimson as she caught the eye of George Delawarr fixed on her with a marked expression, beneath which her own dropped timidly. But now she arose, and bowing with an easy smile, and a few pleasant words, expressed her willingness to abide by her sister's plan.

In a few minutes the ladies met their gallants in the green labyrinth of which Agnes had spoken, and falling into pairs, for the walk was too narrow to allow them all four to walk abreast, they strolled in company toward the Hall.

What words they said I am not about to relate—for such conversations, though infinitely pleasant to the parties, are for the most part infinitely dull to third persons—but it so fell out, not without something of forwardness and marked management, which did not escape the young soldier's rapid eye, on the part of Agnes, that the order of things which had been on the previous evening was reversed; the gay, rattling girl attaching herself perforce to the viscount, not without a sharp and half-sarcastic jest at the expense of her former partner, and the mild heiress falling to his charge.

George Delawarr had been smitten, it is true, the night before by the gaiety and rapid intellect of Agnes, as well as by the wild and peculiar style of her beauty; and it might well have been that the temporary fascination might have ripened into love. But he was hurt, and disgusted even more than hurt by her manner, and observing her with a watchful eye as she coquetted with his friend, he speedily came to the conclusion that St. George was right in his estimate of *her* character at least, although he now seemed to be flattered and amused by her evident prepossession in his favor.

They entered and sat down, still pensive and abstracted ; but ere long the pleasant and happy influences of the time and place appeared to operate in some degree on the feelings of both, but especially on the tranquil and well-ordered mind of the elder sister. She raised her head suddenly, and was about to speak, when the rapid sound of horses' feet, unheard on the soft sand until they were hard by, turned her attention to the window, and the next moment the two young cavaliers, who were even then uppermost in her mind, came into view, cantering along slowly on their well-managed chargers.

Her eye was not quicker than those of the gallant riders, who, seeing the ladies, whom they had ridden over to visit, sitting by the windows of the summer-house, checked their horses on the instant, and doffed their plumed hats.

"Good faith, fair ladies, we are in fortune's graces to-day," said the young peer, gracefully, "since having ridden thus far on our way to pay you our humble devoirs, we meet you thus short of our journey's end."

"But how are we to win our way to you," cried Delawarr, "as you sit there bright *chatelaines* of your enchanted bower—for I see neither fairy skiff, piloted by grim-visaged dwarfs, to waft us over, nor even a stray dragon, by aid of whose broad wings to fly across this mimic moat, which seems to be something of the deepest?"

"Oh! gallop on, gay knights," said Agnes, smiling on Lord St. George, but averting her face somewhat from the cornet, "gallop on to the lodges, and leaving there your coursers, take the first path on the left hand, and that will lead you to our presence; and should you peradventure get entangled in the hornbeam maze, why, one of us two will bring you the clue, like a second Ariadne. Ride on and we will meet you. Come, sister, let us walk."

Blanche had as yet scarcely found words to reply to the greeting of the gallants, for the coincidence of their arrival with her own thoughts had embarrassed her a little, and she had blushed crimson as she caught the eye of George Delawarr fixed on her with a marked expression, beneath which her own dropped timidly. But now she arose, and bowing with an easy smile, and a few pleasant words, expressed her willingness to abide by her sister's plan.

In a few minutes the ladies met their gallants in the green labyrinth of which Agnes had spoken, and falling into pairs, for the walk was too narrow to allow them all four to walk abreast, they strolled in company toward the Hall.

What words they said I am not about to relate—for such conversations, though infinitely pleasant to the parties, are for the most part infinitely dull to third persons—but it so fell out, not without something of forwardness and marked management, which did not escape the young soldier's rapid eye, on the part of Agnes, that the order of things which had been on the previous evening was reversed; the gay, rattling girl attaching herself perforce to the viscount, not without a sharp and half-sarcastic jest at the expense of her former partner, and the mild heiress falling to his charge.

George Delawarr had been smitten, it is true, the night before by the gaiety and rapid intellect of Agnes, as well as by the wild and peculiar style of her beauty; and it might well have been that the temporary fascination might have ripened into love. But he was hurt, and disgusted even more than hurt by her manner, and observing her with a watchful eye as she coquetted with his friend, he speedily came to the conclusion that St. George was right in his estimate of *her* character at least, although he now seemed to be flattered and amused by her evident prepossession in his favor.

He had not, it is true, been deeply enough touched to feel either pique or melancholy at this discovery, but was so far heart-whole as to be rather inclined to laugh at the fickleness of the merry jilt than either to repine or to be angry.

He was by no means the man, however, to cast away the occasion of pleasure ; and walking with so beautiful and soft a creature as Blanche, he naturally abandoned himself to the tide of the hour, and in a little while found himself engaged in a conversation which, if less sparkling and brilliant, was a thousand times more charming than that which he had yesterday held with her sister.

In a short time he had made the discovery that with regard to the elder sister, too, his friend's penetration had exceeded his own ; and that beneath that calm and tranquil exterior there lay a deep and powerful mind, stored with a treasury of the richest gems of thought and feeling. He learned in that long woodland walk that she was, indeed, a creature both to adore and to be adored ; and he, too, like St. George, was certain that the happy man whom she should love would be loved for himself alone, with the whole fervor, the whole truth, the whole concentrated passion of a heart, the flow of which once unloosed, would be but the stronger for the restraint which had hitherto confined it.

Ere long, as they reached the wider avenue, the two parties united, and then more than ever he perceived the immense superiority in all loveable, all feminine points, of the elder to the younger sister ; for Agnes, though brilliant and seemingly thoughtless and spirit-free as ever, let fall full many a bitter word, many a covert taunt and hidden sneer, which, with his eyes now opened as they were, he readily detected, and which Blanche, as he could discover, even through her graceful quietude, felt, and felt painfully.

They reached the Hall at length, and were duly welcomed by its master; refreshments were offered and accepted; and the young men were invited to return often, and a day was fixed on which they should partake the hospitalities of Ditton at least as temporary residents.

The night was already closing in when they mounted their horses and withdrew, both well pleased with their visit; for the young lord was in pursuit of amusement only, and seeing at a glance the coyness of the heiress and the somewhat forward coquetry of her sister, he had accommodated himself to circumstances, and determined that a passing flirtation with so pretty a girl, and a short *séjour* at a house so well appointed as Ditton, would be no unpleasant substitute for London in the dog-days; and George Delawarr, like Romeo, had discarded the imaginary love the moment he found the true Juliet. If not in love he certainly was fascinated—charmed; he certainly thought Blanche the sweetest and most lovely girl he had ever met, and was well inclined to believe that she was the best and most admirable. He trembled on the verge of his fate.

And she—her destiny was fixed already, and for ever! And when she saw her sister delighted with the attentions of the youthful nobleman, she smiled to herself and dreamed a pleasant dream, and gave herself up to the sweet delusion. She had already asked her own heart “does he love me?” and though it fluttered sorely and hesitated for a while, it did not answer “No!”

But as the gentlemen rode homeward, St. George turned shortly on his companion, and said, gravely,

“You have changed your mind, Delawarr, and found out that I am right. Nevertheless, beware! do not, for God’s sake, fall in love with her, or make her love you!”

The blood flushed fiery-red to the ingenuous brow of George Delawarr, and he was embarrassed for a moment. Then he tried to turn off his confusion with a jest.

"What, jealous, my lord! jealous of a poor cornet with no other fortune than an honorable name and a bright sword! I thought you, too, had changed your mind when I saw you flirting so merrily with that merry brunette."

"You did see me *flirting*, George—nothing more; and I *have* changed my mind since the beginning, if not since the end of last evening—for I thought at first that fair Blanche Fitz-Henry would make me a charming wife; and now I am sure that she would *not*—"

"Why so, my lord? For God's sake! why say you so?"

"Because she never would love *me*, George; and *I* would never marry any woman unless I were sure that she both could and did. So you see that I am not the least jealous; but still I say, don't fall in love with her—"

"Faith! St. George, but your admonition comes somewhat late; for I believe I am half in love with her already."

"Then stop where you are and go no deeper; for if I err not, she is more than half in love with you, too."

"A strange reason, St. George, wherefore to bid me stop!"

"A most excellent good one!" replied the other, gravely, and almost sadly, "for mutual love between you two can only lead to mutual misery. Her father never would consent to her marrying you more than he would to her marrying a peasant—the man is perfectly insane on the subject of title-deeds and heraldry, and will accept no one for his son-in-law who cannot show as many *quarterings* as a Spanish grandee or a German noble. But, of course, it is of no use talking about it. Love never yet listened to reason; and, moreover, I suppose what is to be is to be—come what may."

"And what will you do, St. George, about Agnes? I think you are touched there a little!"

"Not a whit I—honor bright! And for what I will do—amuse myself, George—amuse myself, and that pretty coquette too; and if I find her less of a coquette, with more of a heart than I fancy she has—" he stopped short and laughed.

"Well, what then—what then?" cried George Delawarr.

"It will be time enough to decide *then*."

"And so say I, St. George. Meanwhile, I, too, will amuse myself."

"Ay! but observe this special difference—what is fun to *you* may be death to *her*, for she *has* a heart, and a fine, and true, and deep one; may be death to yourself, for you, too, are honorable, and true, and noble; and that is why I love you, George, and why I speak to you thus, at the risk of being held meddlesome or impertinent."

"Oh, never, never!" exclaimed Delawarr, moving his horse closer up to him, and grasping his hand warmly, "never! You meddlesome or impertinent! Let me hear no man call you so. But I will think of this. On my honor, I will think of this that you have said!"

And he did think of it. Thought of it often, deeply—and the more he thought, the more he loved Blanche Fitz-Henry.

Days, weeks, and months rolled on, and still those two young cavaliers were constant visitors, sometimes alone, sometimes with other gallants in their company, at Ditton-in-the-Dale. And ever still, despite his companion's warning, Delawarr lingered by the fair heiress's side, until both were as deeply enamored as it is possible for two persons to be, both single-hearted, both endowed with powerful intellect and powerful imagination; both of that strong and energetic temperament which renders all impressions permanent, all strong passions

immortal. It was strange that there should have been two persons, and there were but two, who discovered nothing of what was passing—suspected nothing of the deep feelings which possessed the hearts of the young lovers; while all else marked the growth of liking into love, of love into that absolute and overwhelming idolatry which but few souls can comprehend, and which to those few is the mightiest of blessings or the blackest of curses.

And those two, as is oftentimes the case, were the very two whom it most concerned to perceive, and who imagined themselves the quickest and the clearest sighted—Allan Fitz-Henry and the envious Agnes.

But so true is it that the hope is oft parent to the thought, and the thought again to security and conviction, that, having in the first instance made up his mind that Lord St. George would be a most suitable successor to the name of the family, and secondly, that he was engaged in prosecuting his suit to the elder daughter, her father gave himself no further trouble in the matter, but suffered things to take their own course without interference.

He saw, indeed, that in public the viscount was more frequently the companion of Agnes than of Blanche; that there seemed to be a better and more rapid intelligence between them; and that Blanche appeared better pleased with George Delawarr's than with the viscount's company.

But, to a man blinded by his own wishes and prejudices, such evidences went as nothing. He set it down at once to the score of timidity on Blanche's part, and to the desire of avoiding unnecessary notoriety on St. George's; and saw nothing but what was perfectly natural and comprehensible in the fact that the younger sister and the familiar friend should be the mutual confidants, perhaps the go-betweens, of the two acknowledged lovers.

He was in high good humor, therefore ; and as he fancied himself on the high-road to the full fruition of his schemes, nothing could exceed his courtesy and kindness to the young cornet, whom he almost overpowered with those tokens of affection and regard which he did not choose to lavish on the peer, lest he should be thought to be courting his alliance.

Agnes, in the meantime, was so busy in the prosecution of her assault on Lord St. George's heart, on which she began to believe that she had made some permanent impression, that she was perfectly contented with her own position, and was well disposed to let other people enjoy themselves, provided they did not interfere with her proceedings. It is true, that at times, in the very spirit of coquetry, she would resume her flirtation with George Delawarr, for the double purpose of piquing the viscount and playing with the cornet's affections, which, blinded by self-love, she still believed to be devoted to her pretty self.

But Delawarr was so happy in himself, that, without any intention of playing with Agnes, or deceiving her, he joked and rattled with her as he would with a sister, and believing that she must understand their mutual situation, at times treated her with a sort of quiet fondness, as a man naturally does the sister of his betrothed or his bride, which effectually completed her hallucination.

The consequence of all this was, that, while they were unintentionally deceiving others, they were fatally deceiving themselves likewise ; and of this, it is probable that no one was aware, with the exception of St. George, who, seeing that his warnings were neglected, did not choose to meddle further in the matter, although keeping himself ready to aid the lovers to the utmost of his ability by any means that should offer.

In the innocence of their hearts, and the purity of their young love, they fancied that what was so clear to themselves, must be

apparent to the eyes of others ; and they flattered themselves that the lady's father not only saw, but approved their affection, and that when the fitting time should arrive, there would be no obstacle to the accomplishment of their happiness.

It is true that Blanche spoke not of her love to her sister, for, apart from the aversion which a refined and delicate girl must ever feel to touching on that subject, unless the secret be teased or coaxed out of her by some near and affectionate friend, there had grown up a sort of distance, not coldness, nor dislike, nor distrust, but simply distaste, and lack of communication between the sisters since the night of the birth-day ball. Still Blanche doubted not that her sister saw and knew all that was passing in her mind, in the same manner as she read her heart ; and it was to her evident liking for Lord St. George, and the engrossing claim of her own affections on all her thoughts, and all her time, that she attributed her carelessness of herself.

Deeply, however, did she err, and cruelly was she destined to be undeceived.

The early days of autumn had arrived, and the woods had donned their many-colored garments, when on a calm, sweet evening—one of those quiet and delicious evenings peculiar to that season—Blanche and George Delawarr had wandered away from the gay concourse which filled the gardens, and unseen, as they believed, and unsuspected, had turned into the old labyrinth, where first they had begun to love, and were wrapped in soft dreams of the near approach of more perfect happiness.

But a quick, hard eye was upon them—the eye of Agnes ; for, by chance, Lord St. George was absent, having been summoned to attend the king at Windsor ; and being left to herself, her busy mind, too busy to rest for a moment idle, plunged into mischief and malevolence.

No sooner did she see them turn aside from the broad walk than the cloud was withdrawn, as if by magic, from her eyes ;

and she saw almost intuitively all that had previously escaped her.

Not a second did she lose, but stealing after the unsuspecting pair with a noiseless and treacherous step, she followed them, foot by foot, through the mazes of the clipped hornbeam labyrinth, divided from them only by the verdant screen, listening to every half-breathed word of love, and drinking in with greedy ears every passionate sigh.

Delawarr's left arm was around Blanche's slender waist, and her right hand rested on his shoulder; the fingers of their other hands were entwined lovingly together, as they wandered onward, wrapped each in the other, unconscious of wrong on their own part, and unsuspecting of injury from any other.

Meanwhile, with rage in her eyes, with hell in her heart, Agnes followed and listened.

So deadly was her hatred, at that moment, of her sister, so fierce and overmastering her rage, that it was only by the utmost exertion of self-control that she could refrain from rushing forward and loading them with reproaches, with contumely, and with scorn.

But biting her lips till the blood sprang beneath her pearly teeth, and clenching her hands so hard that the nails wounded their tender palms, she did refrain, did subdue the swelling fury of her rebellious heart, and awaited the hour of more deadly vengeance.

Vengeance for what? She had not loved George Delawarr—nay, she had scorned him! Blanche had not robbed her of her lover—nay, in her own thoughts, she had carried off the admirer, perhaps the future lover, from the heiress.

She was the wronger, not the wronged! Then wherefore vengeance?

Even, *therefore*, reader, because she had wronged her, and knew it; because her own conscience smote her, and she would fain avenge on the innocent cause, the pangs which at times rent her own bosom.

Envious and bitter, she could not endure that Blanche should be loved, as she felt she was not loved herself, purely, devotedly, for ever, and for herself alone.

Ambitious, and insatiate of admiration, she could not endure that George Delawarr, once her captive, whom she still thought her slave, should shake off his allegiance to herself, much less that he should dare to love her sister.

Even while she listened, she suddenly heard Blanche reply to some words of her lover, which had escaped her watchful ears.

"Never fear, dearest George; I am sure that he has seen and knows all—he is the kindest and the best of fathers. I will tell him all to-morrow, and will have good news for you when you come to see me in the evening."

"Never!" exclaimed the fury, stamping upon the ground violently—"by all my hopes of heaven never!"

And with the words she darted away in the direction of the hall as fast as her feet could carry her over the level green-sward; rage seeming literally to lend her wings, so rapidly did her fiery passions spur her on the road to impotent revenge.

Ten minutes afterward, with his face inflamed with fury, his periwig awry, his dress disordered by the haste with which he had come up, Allan Fitz-Henry broke upon the unsuspecting lovers.

Snatching his daughter rudely from the young man's half embrace, he broke out into a torrent of terrible and furious invective, far more disgraceful to him who used it, than to those on whom it was vented.

There was no check to his violence, no moderation on his tongue. Traitor, and knave, and low-born beggar, were the mildest epithets which he applied to the high-bred and gallant-soldier; while on his sweet and shrinking child he heaped terms the most opprobrious, the most unworthy of himself, whether as a father or as a man.

The blood rushed crimson to the brow of George Delawarr, and his hand fell, as if by instinct, upon the hilt of his rapier; but the next moment he withdrew it, and was cool by a mighty effort.

"From you, sir, anything! You will be sorry for this to-morrow!"

"Never, sir, never! Get you gone! base domestic traitor! Get you gone, lest I call my servants, and bid them spurn you from my premises!"

"I go, sir—" he began calmly; but at this moment St. George came upon the scene, having just returned from Windsor, eager, but, alas! too late, to anticipate the shameful scene—and to him did George Delawarr turn with unutterable anguish in his eyes. "Bid my men bring my horses after me, St. George," said he, firmly, but mournfully; "for me, this is no place any longer. Farewell, sir! you will repent of this. Adieu, Blanche, we shall meet again, sweet one."

"Never! dog, never! or with my own hands—"

"Hush! hush! for shame. Peace, Mister Fitz-Henry, these words are not such as may pass between gentlemen. Go, George, for God's sake! Go, and prevent worse scandal," cried the viscount.

And miserable beyond all comprehension, his dream of bliss thus cruelly cut short, the young man went his way, leaving his mistress hanging in a deep swoon, happy to be for a while unconscious of her misery, upon her father's arm.

Three days had passed—three dark, dismal, hopeless days. Delawarr did his duty with his regiment, nay, did it well—but he was utterly unconscious, his mind was afar off, as of a man walking in a dream. Late on the third night a small note was put into his hands, blistered and soiled with tears. A wan smile crossed his face, he ordered his horses at daybreak, drained a deep draught of wine, sauntered away to his own chamber,

stopping at every two or three paces in deep meditation ; threw himself on his bed, for the first time in his life without praying, and slept, or seemed to sleep, till daybreak.

Three days had passed—three dark, dismal, hopeless days ! Blanche was half dead—for she now despaired. All methods had been tried with the fierce and prejudiced old man, secretly prompted by that demon-girl—and all tried in vain. Poor Blanche had implored him to suffer her to resign her birthright in favor of her sister, who would wed to suit his wishes, but in vain. The generous St. George had offered to purchase for his friend, as speedily as possible, every step to the very highest in the service ; nay, he had obtained from the easy monarch a promise to raise him to the peerage, but in vain.

And Blanche despaired ; and St. George left the Hall in sorrow and disgust that he could effect nothing.

That evening Blanche's maid, a true and honest girl, delivered to her mistress a small note, brought by a peasant lad ; and within an hour the boy went thence, the bearer of a billet, blistered and wet with tears.

And Blanche crept away unheeded to her chamber, and threw herself upon her knees, and prayed fervently and long ; and casting herself upon her painful bed, at last wept herself to sleep.

The morning dawned, merry, and clear, and lightsome ; and all the face of nature smiled gladly in the merry sunbeams.

At the first peep of dawn Blanche started from her restless slumbers, dressed herself hastily, and creeping down the stairs with a cautious step, unbarred a postern door, darted out into the free air, without casting a glance behind her, and fled, with all the speed of mingled love and terror, down the green avenue toward the gay pavilion—scene of so many happy hours.

But again she was watched by an envious eye, and followed by a jealous foot.

For scarce ten minutes had elapsed from the time when she

issued from the postern, before Agnes appeared on the threshold, with her dark face livid and convulsed with passion; and after pausing a moment, as if in hesitation, followed rapidly in the footsteps of her sister.

When Blanche reached the summer-house, it was closed and untenanted; but scarcely had she entered and cast open the blinds of one window toward the road, before a hard horse-tramp was heard coming up at full gallop, and in an instant George Delawarr pulled up his panting charger in the lane, leaped to the ground, swung himself up into the branches of the great oak-tree, and climbing rapidly along its gnarled limbs, sprang down on the other side, rushed into the building, and cast himself at his mistress's feet.

Agnes was entering the far end of the elm-tree walk as he sprang down into the little coplanade, but he was too dreadfully preoccupied with hope and anguish, and almost despair, to observe anything around him.

But she saw him, and fearful that she should be too late to arrest what she supposed to be the lovers' flight, she ran like the wind.

She neared the doorway—loud voices reached her ears, but whether in anger, or in supplication, or in sorrow, she could not distinguish.

Then came a sound that rooted her to the ground on which her flying foot was planted, in mute terror.

The round ringing report of a pistol-shot! and ere its echo had begun to die away, another!

No shriek, no wail, no word succeeded—all was as silent as the grave.

Then terror gave her courage, and she rushed madly forward a few steps, then stood on the threshold horror-stricken.

Both those young souls, but a few days before so happy, so loving, had taken their flight—whither?

Both lay there dead, as they had fallen, but unconvulsed, and graceful even in death. Neither had groaned or struggled, but as they had fallen, so they lay, a few feet asunder—her heart and his brain pierced by the deadly bullets, sped with the accuracy of his never-erring aim.

While she stood gazing, in the very stupor of dread, scarce conscious yet of what had fallen out, a deep voice smote her ear.

"Base, base girl, this is all your doing!" Then, as if waking from a trance, she uttered a long, piercing shriek, darted into the pavilion between the gory corpses, and flung herself headlong out of the open window into the pool beneath.

But she was not fated so to die. A strong hand dragged her out—the hand of St. George, who, learning that his friend had ridden forth towards Ditton, had followed him, and arrived too late by scarce a minute.

From that day forth Agnes Fitz-Henry was a dull, melancholy maniac. Never one gleam of momentary light dispersed the shadows of her insane horror—never one smile crossed her lip, one pleasant thought relieved her life-long sorrow. Thus lived she; and when death at length came to restore her spirit's light, she died, and made no sign.

Allan Fitz-Henry *lived*—a moody misanthropic man, and shunned of all. In truth, the saddest and most wretched of the sons of men.

How that catastrophe fell out none ever knew, and it were useless to conjecture.

They were beautiful, they were young, they were happy. The evil days arrived—and they were wretched, and lacked strength to bear their wretchedness. They are gone where ONE alone must judge them—may HE have pity on their weakness. REQUIESCANT!





et

RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

[illegible]

M309467

